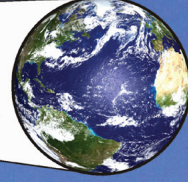


YAIY



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'Tis the
season for
WHAT
and not for
WHAT!



YAIY Beacon



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Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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The Christmas Story

Many during this time of year start to think about Christmas and the relatives they will be able to visit. Others have their minds on activities like gift giving and receiving, which certainly is a part of the Christmas festivities. Others still contemplate what it means biblically and how it relates to the Savior of the world.

While there are good things that one can think of during this time of year, some recognize the danger of worshipping the heavenly Father in a false way. "What?," you may ask. "How can visiting with family, gift giving, and considering Christmas in the Bible, and how it relates to the Savior, be worshipping the Father in a wrong way?"

Sometimes the majority is not always right, and so it is with many religious circles today of well meaning and devout individuals and families. To get a clearer picture we have to back up and see just what happened and when. If you've been keeping Christmas as a holiday all of your life, be prepared to consider the following facts. If you already know where this is going, make sure you do observe the holy days Yahweh commands us to keep.

Real Christmas

As truth is sometimes stranger than fiction, so is the real Christmas story. Going back about 1700 years ago, we find something happening at an accelerated pace called "syncretism." It is a mixing of true worship with pagan or false worship. Some things were mixed in before 3 C.E. and some afterwards. In the case of Christmas, the history books are full of examples of how it was adopted and utilized in worship to the heavenly Father, Yahweh.

Some things that were mixed in, and accepted for awhile, were eventually dropped over time.

These included, but were not limited to, "the Feast of Fools," "the Feast of Boy Bishop," and "the Feast of the Donkey." (Fahlbusch, E., & Bromiley, G. W. (1999-2003). Vol. 1: The Encyclopedia of Christianity (455). Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill).

While not all of the days initially accepted in the early centuries after the Messiah Yahshua's death and resurrection were pagan, many were. "Indeed, the background of many observances such as Christmas, Epiphany, and Ember is pagan." (Myers, A. C. (1987). The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary (1069). Grand Rapids, Mich.; Eerdmans).

Does it really matter, though, if we worship on days that we are able to attribute to Father Yahweh or His Son, Yahshua? The answer, which was explained thousands of years ago, can be found in Scripture:

Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise. Thou shalt not do so unto Yahweh thy Elohim: for every abomination to Yahweh, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it, Deut. 12:30-32.

While some may reason away that this is just Old Testament, it should be pointed out that Yahweh tells us He doesn't change (Mal. 3:6) and the same is said of the Son, Heb. 13:8. Many times we find confirmation of the unity of the Bible when comparing what is written in the Old Covenant and what is written in the New Covenant. They are, in fact, parts of one Book.

What is Holy?

"Holy" basically means, "Set Apart:" something that has a special purpose and purity about it. Yahweh has the right and privilege to set something apart as holy. We do not, except for what He sets apart. For example, He has from the beginning set apart the 7th day as a holy day. We see that this is called Saturday today. Scholars recognize this 7th day pattern is unchanged from the Messiah's time. It is a time we are to keep holy, because He has set it apart from every other day of the weekly cycle. It is something we cannot change. To try to do so or to go with traditional teachings is to put ourselves in His position, or above His position, which we are not to do, 1 Cor 11:3.

There is also only One Holy Father, and we are told, in no uncertain terms,

Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I Yahweh your Elohim am holy, Lev 19:2.

In verse 3 He says,

Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am Yahweh your Elohim.

The Apostle Peter quotes the above saying,

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy, 1 Pet 2:16.

This shows that the Old Testament was not something they ignored now that the Savior had come. No, in fact, they knew the admonition of the Savior to live by every word of His Father, Matt 4:4; Luke 4:4, Mark 4:4 (Quotes from O.T., Deut 8:3). Again, the Old and New Testaments are, in fact, parts of one Book.

Sabbaths Plural

The Bible gives an outline of holy days (convocations, times of meeting, appointed times, Lev 23) not to be confused with the world's

holidays. They each have rich and symbolic meanings in which we are to learn about and remember each year. Note, in all of it, Christmas is missing.

There have been disputes about this particular day, as well as others throughout history, which were not found in Scripture:

"...since it's not obvious from the New Testament that the early church observed Christmas and Easter and Trinity Sunday, these special days were cut out of the Scottish church calendar. The development of Christmas as a major Christian festival in Scotland is a remarkably recent re-emergence. There are still one or two smaller Presbyterian churches that make more of New Year than they do of Christmas." (Christian History Magazine-Issue 46: John Knox & the Scottish Reformation. 1995. Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today)

Today, we are called to repent and turn back to Yahweh to a pure way of worship and to serve Him. This He accepts and expects from us. Ancient Israel failed in presenting themselves to Him properly, even on the days He had set apart as High Sabbaths or High Holy Days. Yahweh even went so far as to start calling them their Sabbaths, since they had corrupted them by their ways of doing things.

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies, Amos 5:21 ESV.

As the Apostle Paul stated, there is a way not to keep, and alternatively, a way to keep, the appointed times of Yahweh:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor 5:8.

American?

As we look at some of the origins of the Christmas story, it may surprise some that Christmas was not even originally an American

holiday.

"...when the Pilgrims came to America, they refused to celebrate Christmas in any special way, regarding it merely as another workday of the year." (George, T. (2001). Vol. 30: Galatians; The New American Commentary (317). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers).

The history of not observing Christmas in America has been contributed to the idea of the Pilgrims, specifically Puritans, not wanting to observe the papal calendar, as they were separating themselves from the corruption of false worship and the mentality of the Church of England. (Fahlbusch, E., & Bromiley, G. W. (1999-2003). Vol. 1: The encyclopedia of Christianity (455). Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill)

America did receive Christmas into the churches after it was presented into the schools to the children, who then proceeded to present it to their families, who then brought it into the realm of worship to the Father. (Fahlbusch, E., & Bromiley, G. W. (1999-2003). Vol. 1: The encyclopedia of Christianity (455). Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill)

While there is no good reason to worship Father Yahweh with adopted pagan means, and in fact was prohibited, it has happened nonetheless. Tradition has brought it down to us as true worship, but nothing could be further from the truth. In America, and going back to England, specifically Germany, one can see the pagan connection and parallels between sacred oaks and the Christmas tree. (Fahlbusch, E., & Bromiley, G. W. (1999-2003). Vol. 1: The Encyclopedia of Christianity (455). Grand Rapids, Mich.; Leiden, Netherlands: Wm. B. Eerdmans; Brill).

The tree has also been used in various fertility rites of pagans

in the past, but the use of trees in worship goes back even to Old Testament times. Yahweh forbids such practices:

Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, And be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; For the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: For one cutteth a tree out of the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; They fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not, Jer 10:2-4.

Birth of the Savior?

In Luke 2:7-8 we find an account of the birth of the Savior,

And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

While considering pagan connections, dating the birth of the Savior to the Winter Solstice time period is not coincidental. Numerous commentaries show that the idea of the Winter birth of the Savior as unlikely:

"The actual date of [Yahshua's] birth is unknown. There is no evidence of celebrating the nativity before the third century." (Achte-meier, P. J., Harper & Row, P., & Society of Biblical Literature. (1985). Harper's Bible dictionary (1st ed.) (163). San Francisco: Harper & Row).

"[Yahshua's] birth itself almost certainly did not occur on December 25. This date became attached to the celebration of Christmas later because it coincided with a Roman holiday known as Saturnalia, when Christians had time off work to worship. Perhaps [Yahshua] was born in the spring when shepherds would have been watching their flocks by night because lambs might be born (Luke 2:8)." (Blomberg, C. (2001).

Vol. 22: Matthew; The New American Commentary (62). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

The pagan god Saturn, the venerable day of the Sun god (sun worship), and other pagan gods all played a part in what we see today in the nominal churches because of man's inclination to combine what they see around them. It's called syncretism and it is prevalent today. Another commentary says of Luke 2:8, "Due to the proximity to Jerusalem, some scholars have suggested that the flocks here are the temple flocks raised for sacrifice. This narrative would have challenged the values of many religious people, who despised shepherds; shepherds' work kept them from participation in the religious activities of their communities. Pasturing of flocks at night indicates that this was a warmer season, not winter (when they would graze more in the day); Roman Christians later adopted December 25 as Christmas only to supersede a pagan Roman festival scheduled at that time." (Keener, C. S., & InterVarsity Press. (1993). The IVP Bible background commentary : New Testament (Lk 2:8). Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press).

Tradition of Men

While some traditions of men are not necessarily bad, when considering pure worship to the Father, we must not be complacent just accepting tradition that connects pagan ways with true worship. There has to be a distinction between the two, not a combining of them, and certainly not reasoning them away as many have and still do today:

"In the church we have many traditions, too. Some of them, such as the special ways in which a congregation celebrates Christmas or Easter, help us draw closer to [Elohim] even though we may not be able to define or support the practices from Scripture. By using the words traditional and contempo-

rary to talk about types of worship, we acknowledge that a good bit of what we do has developed from years of practice." (Gangel, K. O. (1998). Vol. 5: Acts. Holman New Testament Commentary; Holman Reference (245). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers)

The tradition of men, when it comes to covering up Yahweh's word or effectively causing false worship, is something that the Messiah was, and still is, against. It is also something that Yahweh does not desire of us, but rather He hates it. Remember how They do not change and how the Bible is one Book that is united in its presentation.

Religious leaders of the time said,

"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Yahshua replied, "And why do you break the command of Yahweh for the sake of your tradition? For Yahweh said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to Elohim,' he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of Yahweh for the sake of your tradition. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men,'" Matt 15:2-9 NIV.

Our Heart and Mind

While it is true that Yahweh looks at the heart. Do we understand that it is not just faith or good feelings that He is seeking after? What did He expect in the past and what does he expect of us today? Does He have a different standard to live by for us than He did with

ancient Israel? 1 Chronicles 28:9 NASB says,

As for you, my son Solomon, know the Elohim of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for Yahweh searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

Here we find a separation of the heart and the mind; they can work in unison. Though speaking to Solomon, Yahweh expects us to turn to Him with both our heart and mind. Another point to notice is: this is not a New Testament reference. Yet, it speaks clearly of the heart and mind.

So, did Yahweh expect Solomon to be obedient or to just have faith through his heart and mind? Wouldn't both be required to be a good servant of Yahweh? Yahshua, Himself, said,

Yahweh is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, John 4:24.

This would be His Spirit and in His truth. The word (i.e., truth, Psalm 119:151, 160) that we are to live by includes the one about not worshipping Him with pagan ways. He does not want to be reminded of the pagans and their detestable acts.

We can sugar coat dirt all we want, but in the end, it still has the taste of dirt. Yahweh commands proper worship that is acceptable to Him. Let's take a look at what else the Apostle Peter says in addition to quoting the Old Testament (the only Bible they had at that time) saying,

Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Yahshua Messiah. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy your-

selves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY," 1 Pet 1:13-16 NASB.

To have Yahweh's Spirit is to have a portion of His heart and mind working within us to guide and direct us in proper worship toward Him. It is not out of line with His Word. It was prophecy given hundreds of years before the Messiah's time - the time when the Spirit would be given and we would have a deep longing desire to obey Him and to walk in His Spirit:

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them, Ezek 36:26-28.

This was also quoted in the New Testament in the book of Hebrews. While Yahweh applied the law outwardly to Israel on stone tablets for their mind, for example, He still wanted them to get it into their hearts,

For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living Elohim speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? Go near and hear all that Yahweh our Elohim says; then speak to us all that Yahweh our Elohim speaks to you, and we will hear and do it. Yahweh heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and Yahweh said to me, "I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deut 5:26-29)

He gives us the desire within our hearts as He calls us and plants the word in our minds as we earnestly seek Him and study His Word.

We should reflect on what the man after Yahweh's own heart (that is, the one who sought the things of Yahweh's own heart and mind) says:

O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. Thou through Thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: For they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: For Thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, That I might keep Thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: For Thou hast taught me. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through Thy precepts I get understanding: Therefore I hate every false way, Ps 119:97-104.

The straight and narrow path or gate that leads into eternal life (Matt 7:13-14), does not include worshipping Yahweh in ways that He forbids our hearts and minds, Acts 5:32.

Traditions vs. Truth

The Christmas story is multifaceted with adopted traditions such as the mistletoe and Santa Claus, each one having a history of their own. While some may feel there is no harm in introducing these various things into the melting pot of the so-called "Christ's Mass," this holiday that so many gravitate toward is not something Yahweh commanded His people to do in the past, nor is it something we should do today.

We have been told what days have been made holy. In fact, they are said to be lasting ordinances (perpetual statutes). In other words, these appointed times are times that were kept both in the Old and in the New Testament times,

<see **Story** page 10>

The Faith of Yahshua

You've seen it in others. You've probably done it yourself. How many different churches or assemblies or synagogues have you attended, in search of "the true faith?" Or, perhaps you have searched for that religion that "just feels right?" Like the story of Goldilocks, you know: "This church is too hard, this church is too soft, but this church is just right." My mother was Catholic, my father was Presbyterian, and in my entire childhood I never attended services with either, or both, of them. A neighbor took pity on my sister, and, with my parents' permission, took us, both pre-adolescents, to the First Baptist Church, where I had my first religious, and, later my first spiritual, experience. As a teenager, the hand of Yahweh was revealed to me in that church; however, when I answered the altar call, I was ushered into a room with a young counselor, asked if I wanted to be baptized, and, not really understanding the meaning of baptism, replied, innocently, "no." I was then ushered through a door in that office ... out into the parking lot! Talk about confusion. Later, I continued my search. I attended a number of various congregations. I became a Mormon, tried to live a righteous life, paid my tithe, went through the Temple as an Elder and was married for "time and eternity" to a woman from whom I am now divorced. One of the strong tenets of Mormonism is perfectionism, and I took the phrase, "Be ye therefore perfect," literally; and, failing to meet their expectations, I left Mormonism and separated myself from the Creator, believing I would never please the Almighty.

Searching for a True Assembly

I'm telling you all this because I believe many of you have done this, too. You searched for the truth, and searched for a congregation that seemed correct. Well, if my experience has any validity, then I suggest for your consideration that, there IS no ABSOLUTELY CORRECT church, assembly, synagogue or house of worship ... not even the one in which I am currently a member. We are not THE PERFECT assembly, nor is OUR faith THE perfect faith. And I am quite sure I don't need to say this, but just for the record, I am not THE holder of THE truth.

And, by the same token, as well as by the virtue of the following set of verses, neither is YOUR assembly THE perfect assembly with THE perfect faith. And, neither are you THE holder of THE truth.

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no Elohim." They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. Yahweh looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see

if there are any who understand, who seek Elohim. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one, Psalm 14:1-3

Now, if you can understand what the word "corrupt" means, and what "abominable works" means, then you will understand that this chastisement is about sin, the transgression of the Law of Yahweh (1 John 3:4), the Word of Yahweh. Sin means to cease from obedience to the will of the Father. In short, there are none who are perfect. And, apparently, all are far from it.

Traditions

He [Yahshua] said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of Yahweh, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" -- ' (that is, a gift to Yahweh), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of Yahweh of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do," Mark 7:9-13.

The Word of Yahweh IS the Commandment of Yahweh; and, though Word and Commandment are grammatically singular, they refer to everything Yahweh has said.

Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of Yahweh, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yahweh,'" Matthew 4:3-4. (He is quoting Deuteronomy 8:3)

Eternal life is obtained through obedience to Yahweh; but, since there are none who have obeyed the Law of Yahweh perfectly, we are all under the penalty of death. Now, we all know there is one individual who was, is and forever will be, perfect. He now sits at the right hand of Yahweh, Yahshua ha Mashiach, the Son of Yahweh, who did ONLY and EVERYTHING that His Father told Him to do. He was perfect ... and, His faith was perfect.

His faith was perfect. This begs the question, "What IS the faith of Yahshua?" What did He believe? How did He worship His Father? And, most importantly for our discussion, "Are we to do the same?"

Law versus Faith

But, before I answer these questions, I want to reconsider the often-taught concept that we are no

longer required to obey the Law of Yahweh. One of the “proof-texts” used to justify this doctrine is found in Galatians 2:16:

A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

Now, this verse has been quoted as “proof positive” that we no longer are “under the Law” as some like to say it, mistranslating, misquoting and misunderstanding Paul. In Galatians 2:16, there is a flagrant flaw, foolishly favored in a formal and fundamentally flourished fashion, founded on frivolous findings. (And, you can quote me on that). What I mean is, this passage has been translated incorrectly and preached AGAINST the teachings of Yahweh. And, it involves only one error in one word, the conjunction, “but.”

“A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Yahshua the Messiah.” Can

you hear how this separates and puts at odds the phrase “works of the law” and “faith in Yahshua”? In other words, the translation emphatically implies that “You cannot keep the law and believe in Yahshua at the same time.” The English word, “but,” here is made up of two Greek words, eán-meé, which is literally translated “if not.” This pair of words is found a total of 41 times in the New Testament and translated “except” 39 times. The other three times, they are translated “unless” in most of the other versions of Scripture. So, truly, the word “but” has NO place in this verse. It is absolutely incorrect. It should have been translated literally as “if not,” “except” or “unless”, not “but.”

Looking at Galatians 2:16 again:

A man is not justified by the works of the law IF NOT by faith in Yahshua the Messiah.

The meaning here is clear that justification requires BOTH the Law and faith in Yahshua; however, I believe it is not the best translation. Rather, all other translations for eán-meé use “except” or “unless.” Does the following make more sense? More importantly, does this ring true?

“A man is not justified by the works of the law EXCEPT by faith in Yahshua the Messiah.”

Or,

“A man is not justified by the works of the law UNLESS by faith in Yahshua the Messiah.”

Galatians 2:16							
is justified	a man	by	the	works	of the law,	but	by
1344	444	1537	9999	2041	3551	3362	1223
dikaioútai	ánthroopos	ex		érgoon	nómou	eán-meé	diá
		the	faith	of Jesus	Christ		
		9999	4102	2424	5547		
		písteoos	leesou	Christou			
(Interlinear Transliterated Bible. Copyright (c) 1994 by Biblesoft)							

Paul is saying that, “Unless you have the faith of Yahshua the Messiah, your obedience to the Law of Yahweh is not justified!”

Is it also now clear what James (Yaacob) meant when he said, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (James 2:26)”?

What Is the Faith of Yahshua?

Alright. Now, to answer the questions posed earlier: “What IS the faith of Yahshua?” What did He believe? How did He worship His Father? And, most importantly for our discussion, “Are we to do the same?”

There are seven witnesses to

the faith of Yahshua that can be pointed to in the Book of Revelation. Let’s look at them.

Witness #1

Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of Yahweh and the faith of Yahshua, Revelation 14:12.

Patience means “hopeful endurance” in the Greek; faith means “persuasion, belief, fidelity, credence or moral conviction; and, by extension, the word ‘faith’ can refer to a system of religious truth itself.” A system, you know, like the Bible. “To keep” means “to guard, hold fast and serve.” Saints means “the righteous ones.” So, a “revealing” translation of Revelation 14:12

might read:

“Here is the enduring hope of the righteous ones; here are those who guard, hold fast and serve the commandments of Yahweh

with fidelity to the Scriptural truth of Yahshua.”

Yahshua is saying to John, in essence, “Here is what those who are seeking righteousness will do to find hope that will endure to the end: Serve Yahweh by obeying His commandments, as I have done.”

So, what is the faith of Yahshua? Simple. His faith is “Obedience to Yahweh.” Pure and simple, but agreeably not easy. Is this your faith, to obey Yahweh? As I look back to all of the congregations I’ve attended, I see that, yes, there was a semblance of obedience to Yahweh, whether the congregations were Jewish, Messianic, Catholic, Christian ... or even Buddhist! I can see a semblance of obedience

to Yahweh in all of these religions, and this is how people become entrapped within false religions. But, is that what Yahweh wants? Is that what Yahshua believed? Is His faith based on a membership in a particular congregation? No! Yahweh forbid!

In truth, although it is widely taught that “no one can obey the Law, perfectly,” it is within everyone’s power to do so. Think about it. When was the last time you murdered someone? Committed adultery? Stole something from someone? Bore false witness in a trial? Made an idol and bowed down to it? Is it impossible to call upon and praise the name of Yahweh and worship Him on the 7th day of the week? Who can obey these laws? Everyone! However, since Yahshua came as the Messiah of Yahweh, the bar of obedience has been raised to a Spiritual level, i.e., it’s not simply murder, but anger; or, it’s not simply adultery, but lust. We have been granted the Holy Spirit while living in this flesh, and we are now charged with the responsibility to follow Yahshua in Spirit and in truth. This in no way negates the letter of the Law of Yahweh; rather, obedience is now a matter of an inward change of heart. However, who understands this more than Yahweh? After all, He created us and then cursed this earth for our benefit when we (through Adam) disobeyed Him. Yahweh instituted the Law of Sin and Death: If you sin, you die. But, Yahweh sent a Shepherd to gather the lost sheep into a flock of righteous ones; “sheep” who would follow the Shepherd and walk His path [that is, His “Cycles” – an allusion to the Appointed Times of Yahweh] to the green pastures and still waters of the Kingdom of Yahweh. Shall we walk together on His path, or shall we each go our own way?

Witness #2

And the dragon was enraged

with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of Yahweh and have the testimony of Yahshua the Messiah, Revelation 12:17.

Testimony means evidence given, a record, report or witness. The testimony of Yahshua is the evidence, the WORKS of His obedience to the Father. We, being the “rest of her offspring,” that is, of the Seed of Yahshua, filled with the Word of Yahweh, do the same. We believe, and we have faith that Yahshua is the Messiah of Yahweh, sent to guide us to the Father.

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me, John 5:30.

Yahshua said to them, "If Yahweh were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from Yahweh; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of Yahweh hears Yahweh's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of Yahweh," John 8:42-47.

Witness #3

The Revelation of Yahshua the Messiah, which Yahweh gave Him to show His servants – things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, who bore witness to the word [the Law or com-

mandment] of Yahweh, and to the testimony [the faith, including the righteous works] of Yahshua the Messiah, to all things that he saw. Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near, Revelation 1:1-3.

What a wonderful way of saying, “Here’s what I want you to do, read the Word of Yahweh to others, listen to what the Word of Yahweh says, and do it. Righteous works provide evidence that the Spirit of Yahweh is bringing life to one’s faith.

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous, 1 John 3:7.

Witness #4

I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Yahshua the Messiah, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word [because he honored the Law or commandment] of Yahweh and for the testimony [the faith, including the righteous works] of Yahshua the Messiah, Revelation 1:9.

Witness #5

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of Yahweh is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of Yahweh. They sing the song of Moses, the servant of Yahweh, and the song of the Lamb, saying: "Great and marvelous are Your works, Yahweh El Shaddai! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Yahweh, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your

judgments have been manifested," Revelation 15:1-4.

Witness #6

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Yahshua and for the word [the Law or commandment] of Yahweh, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with the Messiah for a thousand years. [But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished]. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of Yahweh and of the Messiah, and shall reign with Him a thousand years, Revelation 20:4-6.

Consider the phrase, "priests of Yahweh and of the Messiah" The priests of Yahweh would be Levitical priests, would they not? And, since Yahshua is of the priesthood of Melchizedek, would we not also be Melchizedek priests? I think both will be necessary in the Kingdom, since there will be offerings made in the one thousand-year reign of the Messiah.

Witness #7

When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word [the Law or commandment] of Yahweh and for the testimony [the faith, including the righteous works] which they held [which they guarded], Revelation 6:9-10.

Listen to what Yahshua says about the assembly at Pergamos:

These things says He who has the sharp two-edged sword: "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did

not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells," Revelation 2:12-14.

You did not deny My faith. It doesn't say what Antipas was martyred for, but what I understand about paganism is that the authorities really didn't care what your religion was; however, they got bent out of shape when people refused to give offerings to Zeus, the god of the pagan temple in Pergamos. I suspect that Antipas refused to bow down, worship and give an offering to this pagan deity. Since Zeus was the sun deity, who knows, maybe Antipas got caught working on Sunday. Or, alternatively, Antipas may have refused to bring a present for Zeus on December 25. Whatever it is, it cost Antipas his life.

One More Witness

So when Yahshua came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Yahshua was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. Now Martha said to Yahshua, "Master, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of Yahweh, Yahweh will give You." Yahshua said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Yahshua said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" She said to Him, "Yes, Master, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of Yahweh, who is to come into the world," John 11:17-27.

It is not just believing in Yahshua that guarantees our eternal life, but living in Yahshua that will bring that reward. We are to live the life He lived, in obedience to Yahweh. May Yahshua lead us through the judgment coming down from Heaven and into the promised land! HalleluYah!

Elder John Fisher

<Story from page 6>

as well as to be kept in the future coming Kingdom. There is no time period in which we are told not to observe them.

The wording "holy convocations," found along side "perpetual statutes" (Lev 23), is significant in that we are given specific appointment times in which we are to meet with each other and with Him, to worship Him. You wouldn't want to miss a doctor's appointment, would you? Why then would we want to miss the specific times Yahweh wants us to come before Him together?

The Christmas story is a history filled with traditions that we, as a people, do not need to be involved in. What we should be involved with is the truth, not tradition. This is especially true when that tradition has been gathered from the nations and incorporated together to worship Yahweh. He doesn't like such things and calls them for what they are, an abomination. He wants us to come together and worship Him in Spirit and in truth; that is what He wants,

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. Yahweh is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth, John 4:23-24.

Elder David Brett



The Real Truth About Christmas

This is the time of year when retail store owners will advertise sales on most of their merchandise. Customers do not realize that retailers, with a markup of hundreds of percentage points and using a 30%, 40% or 50% off sale, will still make a large profit on those items. This is the time of year when retailers make the majority of their annual profit. This is also the time of a year when normally courteous people show an adverse attitude toward other people.

As the years seem to roll by, retailers are setting up their Christmas display at an earlier date. In the distant past, it was traditional to set up displays in November to have the Friday following Thanksgiving to be declared as the start of shopping for Christmas. Retailers would advertise enormous bargains enticing people to shop. Now, in the recent past, shop owners started setting up their displays in September, because of the recession they say. But, recently, one can see ads using the phrase, "Christmas in July," are being considered by Target, Sears and Toys R Us. At this rate, some day one might see the following advertised in the January 1st newspaper, "Shop early for Christmas..." Closely related to the retail side of Christmas (mainly because one is seen in many retail stores) is Santa Claus.

Santa Claus

Aside from the history on the origin of Santa Claus is how many parents handle situations involving their children and Santa. One will undoubtedly hear a parent saying to their child while they were shopping, "You behave now or Santa will not come for Christmas." The existence of Santa is instilled in children at a very early age by their parents. To what extent? When the children grow up they find that there is no Santa and, in reality, their parents lied to them.

Of all the stories concerning the origins of Santa

Claus most of them center on a person by the name of Nicholas, who was born around 245 AD in Patara, in present day Turkey. One story is about an angel who appeared to a cardinal appointing a new bishop for the Turkish town of Mira (now Kale). The angel told the cardinal to ordain the 30-year old Nicholas. Throughout his priesthood, Nicholas was recognized for his generosity to all those in trouble and he became known for the granting of wishes.

It has been said that St. Nicholas climbed on the roof of a house and dropped a bag of gold down the chimney where it landed in a stocking hung to dry, giving us a reason to hang up Xmas stockings today. It is held by some scholars that the legends of Nicholas as gift-giving drew in part from pagan, pre-Christian sources. For example, The Teutonic god of the air, Odin, would ride through the air on a gray horse (named Leipnir) each autumn – so did Nicholas; Odin had a long white beard – so did Nicholas; a sheaf of grain was left in the field for Odin's horse – children left a wisp of straw in their shoes for Nicholas. Some attribute the characteristics of the German god Thor to Nicholas, as Thor was supposedly elderly and heavy with a long white beard; he rode through the air in a chariot drawn by two white goats (called Cracher and Gnasher); he dressed in red; his palace was in the "northland;" he was friendly and cheerful; he would come down the chimney into his element, the fire.

Once the story of his deeds spread, he became known for helping those in trouble. He became known as the patron saint of children. Many churches and cathedrals were named after him, and next to the Messiah and the Virgin Mary, Nicholas was the next most popular figure in Christianity. His popularity spread to the Laplands – to the people of the reindeer sleds.

In a French village during the 12th century, local nuns honored their patron on December 6, which be-



Saint Nicholas 1849 engraving by Boyd



Detail from *First Celebration of the Festival of St. Nicholas* by The New-York Historical Society, Broadside by Alexander Anderson, December 6, 1810, commissioned by John Pintard, NY 1864-21, negative number 28883.



"Merry Old Santa Claus," by Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly, January 1, 1881.



Vast Santa, Bishop Nicholas, Coke Santa, Illustration by Renee Graef, *A Special Place for Santa Roman, Inc.*, 1991. Permission pending.



Coca-Cola Santa by Haddon Sundblom Courtesy of the Coca-Cola Company

The transformation of Santa Claus (St. Nicholas, Saint Nick, etc.) from 1849 to present day

came St. Nicholas Day. The nuns delivered candy to all the children who'd been good, leaving it for them in their shoes, and leaving switches in the shoes of the naughtier children. Because they seemed to cover so much territory, some began to say it was St. Nicholas himself who delivered the gifts.

On the eve of the feast of St. Nicholas, the bishop, himself, was said to come and visit children in their homes, giving gifts to those who had been good.

By medieval times Nicholas had become the most beloved patron saint of Europe, and through the Middle Ages, the story of Christmas in Europe developed to combine religious and pagan myths. An interesting observation: if one abbreviates St. Nicholas one gets Saint Nick.

It was Dutch sailors who came to the New World and would not give up St. Nicholas as their patron; when they settled, particularly around the New York area, their nickname Santer Klause (Sinter Klaas) became the name we know as Santa Claus. St. Nicholas is the national saint of Russia and Greece.

When Luther created the Prot-

estant church, he realized it would be necessary to wean German children off of St. Nick, so he created Krist Kindle, a winged cherub, who also flew and brought gifts to good children – but which instead focused the celebration around the Messiah. He came on Christmas Eve, which more closely coincides with the Winter Solstice, around which pagan religion celebrated the return of the sun's light.

In the Protestant areas of central and northern Germany, St. Nicholas later became known as der Weihnachtsmann. In England he came to be called Father Christmas. In France, Pere Noel. Italy had Bafana, out looking for the child, left gifts in her wake for other kids. The gnome Tompten was Sweden's figure, and in the U. S., Martin Luther's Krist Kindle became Kris Kringle.

After the reformation, German Protestants encouraged veneration of the Christkindl as the gift giver on his own feast day, December 25. Because the Nicholas tradition prevailed it became attached to Christmas itself.

After the American Revolution, New Yorkers remembered with pride the colony's nearly forgot-

ten Dutch roots. John Pintard, influential patriot and antiquarian, who founded the New York Historical Society in 1804, promoted St. Nicholas as patron saint of both society and city.

The American author Washington Irving gave America their first detailed information about the Dutch version of Saint Nicholas. In his *History of New York*, published in 1809 under the pseudonym Diedrich Knickerbocker, Irving described the arrival of the saint on horseback each eve of Saint Nicholas (December 6). This Dutch-American Saint Nick achieved his fully Americanized form in 1823 in the poem *A Visit From Saint Nicholas* (better known as *The Night Before Christmas* by writer Clement Clarke Moore). This poem gave a big boost to the jolly elf image.

The New York Historical Society held its first St. Nicholas anniversary dinner on December 6, 1810. John Pintard commissioned artist Alexander Anderson to create the first American image of Nicholas for the occasion. Nicholas was shown in a gift giving role with children's treats in stockings hanging at a fireplace.

In 1863, political cartoonist

Thomas Nast began a series of annual drawings in Harper's Weekly which were based on the descriptions found in the poem and Washington Irving's work. These drawings established a rotund Santa with flowing beard, fur garments, and an omnipresent clay pipe. As Nast drew Santa until 1886, his work had considerable influence in forming the American Santa Claus.

Dozens of artists portrayed Santa in a wide range of styles, sizes, and colors, including Norman Rockwell on Saturday Evening Post covers. But it was in the 1930s that the now familiar American Santa image solidified. Haddon Sundblom began thirty-five years of Coca-Cola Santa advertisements which finally established Santa as an icon of contemporary commercial culture. This Santa was life-sized, jolly, and wearing the now familiar red suit. He appeared in magazines, on billboards, and shop counters encouraging Americans to see Coke as the solution to "a thirst for all seasons."

In the book titled *Fossilized Customs*, the author, Lew White, states the following:

"In the late 1800's, a pharmacist put some cocaine in a sweetened, bubbling cola beverage, and named it Coca-Cola. By the 1930's, it was a major business, and had its own advertising department, strategists, and artists. One of the artists, Rosenblum, decided to attempt something new. The Dutch/Irish character called 'Santa Claus' was beginning to get a lot of attention, so he set his mind on aligning the Coca-Cola product with him. In Rosenblum's time, Santy Clause didn't look like he does now. The original character was an Irish transplant, coming from people who had based their beliefs on Druid magic, and elves. The 9th century poem, *The Night Before Christmas*, had catapulted our Christ Elf into the spotlight because

the character was so appealing. Rosenblum used his artistic imagination to change Santy Claus into what we think he looks like today. Before, Santa was no more than 2 feet tall, skinny, and wore green. He had a long white beard, and for all practical purposes he was a leprechaun/elf character with magical powers to grant wishes, watch you without being seen, and so on. The alignment with the hearth is other pagan syncretism, right down to the stocking hung by the chimney with care. To make this night visitor charming and more human, Rosenblum made him a full-sized man, jolly and plump, to better assume the distinctive shape of the Coke bottle. He also used the appealing red and white product to clothe Santa in. The drooping wizard hat was a must."

Christmas Tree And Decorations

In the Middle Ages, the Germans and Scandinavians placed evergreen trees inside their homes or just outside their doors to show their hope for the forthcoming spring. The modern Christmas tree evolved from these evergreen trees that were regarded as a symbol of life.

The star that is usually placed at the top of the evergreen tree is said to symbolize the star which appeared in the sky to guide the wise men to the place of the Messiah's birth.

The gifts that are usually placed beneath the evergreen tree are representative of the gifts the three wise men brought and gave to the Messiah, not to another person.

The white color of a candy cane is said to symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of the Messiah. The hardness of the cane is to represent the solid rock. The "J" shape of the cane is to represent the name of "J-sus." The three red stripes are said to represent the trinity and the blood shed by the Messiah. These

last two associations can not be found anywhere in Scriptures.

Compton's Encyclopedia, under the article Tree and Decorations tells the following:

"The Christmas tree was introduced into England early in the 19th century and was popularized by Prince Albert, the German husband of Queen Victoria. The trees were decorated with candles, candies, paper chains, and fancy cakes that were hung from the branches with ribbons.

"German settlers brought the Christmas tree to the American colonies in the 17th century. By the 19th century its use was quite widespread. Trees were also popular in Austria, Switzerland, Poland, and Holland. In China and Japan, Christmas trees were introduced by Christian missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. There they were decorated with intricate paper designs.

"The use of evergreens for wreaths and other decorations arose in northern Europe. Italy, Spain, and some other nations use flowers instead. Holly, with its prickly leaves and red berries, came into holiday use because it reminded people of the crown of thorns worn by [Yahshua] on the way to His execution and the berries symbolized droplets of blood."

Babylon, Mystery Religion, p. 164, tells us:

"In connection with the customs of the 'Christmas' season, we will mention the Christmas tree. An old Babylonish fable went like this: Semiramis, the mother of Tammuz (Ezek. 8:14), claimed that overnight an evergreen tree sprang up from a dead stump. The dead stump supposedly symbolized her dead husband Nimrod; the new evergreen tree was the symbol that Nimrod had come to life again in the person of Tammuz!"

Funk and Wagnalls Standard Reference Encyclopedia, vol. 6, p. 2118, tells us that "the use of

Christmas trees probably originated among the Romans of pre-Christian times from whom it spread to the Germanic peoples and thence to the peoples of the British Isles."

Quoting from *The Two Babylons*, page 97 we read:

"The Christmas tree, now so common among us, was equally common in pagan Rome and pagan Egypt. In Egypt that tree was the palm-tree; in Rome it was the fir; the palm-tree denoting the pagan messiah, as Baal-Tamar, the fir referring to him as Baal-Berith."

Yule Log

On page 98 of *The Two Babylons* by Alexander Hislop, we read the following:

"Now the Yule Log is the dead stock of Nimrod, deified as the sun-god, but cut down by his enemies.

"If the mother was a tree, the son [Nimrod - son of Cush, Gen. 10:8, and founder of Babylon] must have been recognized as the 'Man the branch.' And this entirely accounts for the putting of the Yule Log into the fire on Christmas Eve.

"Nimrod was the divine child born at the winter solstice as a new incarnation of the great god (after that god had been cut in pieces), on the purpose to revenge his death upon his murderers. Now the great god, cut off in the midst of his power and glory, was symbolized as a huge tree, stripped of all its branches and cut-down almost to the ground. But the great serpent, the symbol of the life restor-

ing Aesculapius, twists itself around the dead stock, and lo, at its side up sprouts a young tree - a tree of an entirely different kind, that is destined never to be cut down by hostile power - even the palm-tree, the well-known symbol of victory."

The word "yule" is the Chaldee name for an "infant" or "little child."

The decorated tree represents the slain deity come to life again. Yahweh warns against erecting Christmas trees in Jeremiah 10:2-5:

Thus saith Yahweh, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the 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 is it in them to do good.

Candles

"Candles, lighted on Christmas-eve, and used so long as the festive season lasts, were equally lighted by the pagans on the eve of the festival of the Babylonian god, to do honor to him: for it was one of the distinguishing peculiarities of his worship to have lighted wax-candles on his altars," *The Two Babylons*, page 97.

Today, the wax candles have been replaced by colored bulbs for the obvious reason of the candles being a fire hazard.

The Christmas Goose

"The Christmas goose was an essential article in the worship of the Babylonian messiah, as that worship was practiced both in Egypt and at Rome.

"In Egypt the favorite offering

to Osiris was a goose and that the goose could only be eaten in the depth of winter," *The Two Babylons*, page 101.

"This picture of a woodcut shows that the goose in Asia Minor was the symbol of Cupid, just as it was the symbol of Seb in Egypt. In India, the goose occupied a similar position; for in that land we read of the sacred 'Brahmany goose,' or goose sacred to Brahma," *The Two Babylons*, p. 101.

Mistletoe

Closely connected to the tree growing from a dead stump is the mistletoe.

The use of the mistletoe bough is from Druidic superstition. It was derived from Babylon as a representation of the messiah, "the man the branch" - Nimrod.

The tradition of kissing under the mistletoe descends from the customs of several different cultures. For example, it was a tradition of Greek festivals and marital ceremonies to exchange kisses under the mistletoe. In Scandinavia, mistletoe was considered a plant of peace, under which enemies



could declare a truce or warring spouses kiss and make-up. In Europe, branches of mistletoe were hung from ceilings to ward off evil spirits.

Although the mistletoe is considered to be the seed of love, the common name of the plant is derived from the ancient belief that the mistletoe grew from bird droppings. In ancient times, people observed that mistletoe appeared on a branch or twig where birds had left droppings. "Mistle" is the Anglo-Saxon word for "dung," and "tan" is the word for "twig." So, mistletoe actually means "dung-on-a-twig." What a strange meaning for a plant that is supposed to bring love and happiness!

Winter Solstice Celebrations

In the northern hemisphere the winter solstice occurs when the sun reaches its southernmost point in the celestial point in the sky. After this time when the sun appears to be rising higher in the sky idolatrous worshippers would be celebrating the sun being born again.

According to The World Book Encyclopedia, in 354 CE the December 25th date was selected by Liberius, a bishop of Rome, "because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the Sun."

Other sources show that this day was the Saturnalia, a festival of much revelry, dancing, merriment, and feasting. A king was appointed over the revels. Slaves were freed. Foes became friends. Friends feasted together. Evergreen decorated the houses. Songs were sung in honor of Saturnalia. Gifts were exchanged between friends. This festival was adopted by the church, who turned it into what was called "Christ's Mass." All of this began 2,000 years before the birth of the Messiah!

In Central Europe a feast was

held at the time of the winter solstice. A large wooden wheel was covered with straw so that no wood was visible. It was then dragged to the top of a steep mountain. Here a feast of merrymaking, games, and dancing was carried out all day. At the time of vespers, this symbol of the sun was set on fire and allowed to roll down the mountain.

This act was to represent the sun running from the sky, for according to the idolatry of pagan Germans, the sun was a large fire-wheel rolling through space. This, then, represented the celebration of the sun's birth.

Under the article "Christmas," by Cardinal McClosky, we read in the Catholic Dictionary:

"St. Chrysostom, in a Christmas sermon delivered at Antioch in the year 386, says, 'It is not ten years since this day (Christmas day on December 25) was clearly known to us.'"

By this source it is evident that prior to 377 CE that December 25 was not mentioned or used as the birth date of the Messiah Yahshua.

Timing Is Way Off

But, you say, didn't the wise men celebrate Christmas because they visited the babe in the manger?

Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary, His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their

treasures, they presented unto Him gifts - gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, Matt. 2:7-11.

These verses unequivocally tell us that our Savior was in a house and that the gifts referred to were given to our Savior, Yahshua, and not to others. They were given to Yahshua because that was the custom among peoples of that time when they came before a king. Matt. 2:2 tells us that Yahshua was called the "King of the Jews."

Historical facts reveal that shepherds did not feed their flocks by night from late October or early November until around late April or early May (around Passover) because of the severity of the winter cold and rains.

Either the common nativity scene is seriously flawed or the shepherds in the Middle East had a strange way of herding and caring for their animals. The animals surely would not be in the fields seven weeks later, and especially not at night when temperatures plummet.

Further evidence that the Savior was not born in December comes with the proclamation by Caesar Augustus that all citizens were to travel back to their hometowns to complete a census.

Why December 25?

The Bible does not give a December 25 birth date for our Savior Yahshua. In fact, it never says when He was born. "Christmas" is a contraction for "Christ's Mass," a Roman Catholic observance. It was designed to compete with a heathen feast called Saturnalia held in honor of the sun deity Mithras.

A book called "Mystery Religions in the Ancient World" (page 99) reveals how closely this Mithras figure was to the Savior Yahshua. Mithras was "the creator and orderer of the universe," hence a manifestation of the creative Logos or Word. Seeing mankind afflicted

by Ahriman, the cosmic power of darkness, he incarnated on earth. Shepherds reported His birth on December 25. After many deeds he held a last supper with his disciples and returned to heaven. At the end of the world he will come again to judge resurrected mankind and after the last battle, victorious over evil, he will lead the chosen ones through a river of fire to a blessed immortality.

Among the pagans, Mithras was the sun deity. His birthday on December 25 came at the winter solstice, when the sun returned once again and warmed the dying earth. Their new year began with this phenomenon, which is why our new year starts in the dead of winter. The true Scriptural new year begins in the spring in the month of Abib (meaning "green ear month," Deut. 16:1), when all things begin to green up.

Assisted by the Roman government, the church made a conscious effort to combine elements of this pagan worship into their own worship. In the fourth century, the church desired to bring the pagan Germans and Romans into its fold. December 25 was adopted as the birth date of our Savior who was born in a manger. They incorporated many heathen rites like the yule log and the fir tree, where the yule log, representing Mithras, was burned in the fire and from it an evergreen tree was to have sprung forth.

Bible scholars know full well that the Messiah was not born anywhere near December 25. Yet, when this is pointed out to people, the answer most often given is that they really don't care when He was born, just so long as a day is kept in memory of His birth. Yet, why should anyone celebrate a day that has its roots in paganism?

Yahshua's Time of Birth

Using Scripture it is easy to get

an approximation of when Yahshua was born.

And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease... Dan. 9:27.

Not only does this show that Yahshua died in the middle of the week on Wednesday but also that Yahshua's work of confirming the covenant lasted for 3 and one-half years.

Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Yahshua also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Yahshua himself began to be

about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, Luke 3:21-23.

Here we see that Yahshua was about thirty years of age when He began His ministering.

After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know My breach of promise, Num. 14:34.

And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the House of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year, Ezek. 4:6.

We know that Yahshua died on Passover which occurred at the end of March or the beginning of April. Tracing back three and one-half years would end up occurring at the end of September or the first part of October. This is certainly not December 25. Also, the end of September or the beginning of October places the time during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Therefore, we can conclude that Yahshua was born about the same time in the year that He was baptized by John the Baptist - very near, if not during, the Feast of Tabernacles.

Fact Or Fiction

But, how much of this is really fact and how much is fiction? One only needs to look into resources to find out more on this subject. And what one will find out is that this widely celebrated religious day is associated with sun worship, fertility rites, and even human sacrifices tied to paleo-Christian observances.

The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge tells us under "Christmas," p. 47, that "There is no historical evidence that our Savior's birthday was celebrated during the apostolic or early post apostolic times."

<see **Truth** page 22>

To view this mini-study go to our
web site at www.yaiy.org or phone
1-877-642-4101

Mini - Study

**Is Christmas
a Biblical Observance?**

"Put the Savior back in Christmas," people cry. But was He ever there in the first place?

By far the most important celebration in the Western world today is Christmas. Billions of dollars will be spent this year on gifts, gift wrapping, candy, decorations, and greeting cards in a gigantic, annual spending spree that starts in earnest right after Hallowe'en—and shifts into overdrive the day after Thanksgiving.

Merchants hinging their hopes for the entire sales year on Christmas profits keep the momentum at a fever pitch. A nonstop flood of advertisements and promotions entice an exploitable public to continue spending themselves into debt at this time each year.

The more religiously disposed object to the commercialization of the "Savior's birthday." They can see that this annual celebration has little in common with any Biblical observance. On the contrary, Christmas today is little more than a mandatory ritual of gift exchanging done under the guise of family togetherness and pleasing children.

But the Bible believer must stop to ask himself, am I pleasing my Heavenly Father by my Christmas observance? If this is what He wants me to do, then surely I can find in His very Word—the Bible—at least one passage telling me to keep this holiday.

Shocking as it may be, you cannot find even one command in the entire Bible to keep this supposed birthday of the Savior! Furthermore, nowhere in the New Testament is there a single instance where someone observed Christmas. Not one of the Apostles observed December 25, nor did any of them ever in the Savior's 33 years on this earth throw Him a birthday party. Nowhere do we find His disciples giving a gift to Him on December 25. Nor did anyone else. Not even to one another.

Aspects of Salvation

Many people refer to themselves as "born again" and "saved." Those who think of themselves as "born again" also consider themselves "saved."

Whether thinking "saved" or "born again," people think of salvation (a future entry into the Kingdom of heaven) as absolutely certain. This thinking results because man's doctrines confuse a future event, "born again," with a present event.

Man's teachings also mistake being "saved" as found in Ephesians 2:5 and 8 with a future salvation. There is a future salvation, so what does Paul mean by, "I tell you, now is the time of Yahweh's favor, now is the day of salvation," 2 Corinthians 6:2?

Three Salvation Tenses

In his book, *Major Bible Themes*, Lewis Chaffer says there are three tenses of salvation: past, present, and future. For the past tense he writes, "There are certain Scriptures which, when speaking of salvation, refer to it as wholly past, or completed for the one who has believed."

For the present tense he says, "This aspect of salvation has to do with salvation from the reigning power of sin."

And, for the future tense, "The believer will yet be saved into full conformity to [Messiah]."

He cites Scriptures for each of these tenses but does not quote them. He takes it for granted that his readers will look them up and read them to verify the tenses of salvation.

Merely referring to a Scripture without quoting it may be taking a lot for granted, but the procedure has to be followed in this article too. Quoting each reference would make this work too long and cumbersome. Therefore, only the few Scriptures needed to maintain continuity and clarity are quoted from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

It is hoped that the reader will study the referenced Scriptures. Yahweh will reward an earnest search of the Bible by revealing a scripturally sound reason for accepting or rejecting any idea presented.

He is not pleased with off-hand belief or disbelief because too many are deceived into rejecting truth and believing lies through a careless attitude toward His Word. That is why He tells those who seek truth to "prove all things."

In *All the Doctrines of the Bible*, Herbert Lockyer also says there are three tenses of salvation. He re-

fers to them as "The Grades of Salvation."

He writes, "It is to be feared that not all evangelicals fully understand the implications of salvation. Too often it is confined to what takes place in the initial experience of conversion. [Messiah] is accepted as Savior, and with the guilt and burden of sin removed, the confession is made, 'Praise [Yahweh], I have been saved.' And there the matter rests.

But, the teaching of the New Testament is, 'I have been saved: I am being saved: I have yet to be saved.' If we fail to recognize these three aspects, tenses or gradations of salvation, then ours is not the realization of the uttermost salvation [Yahweh] has for His own."

Note how Mr. Lockyer also equates "saved" with salvation! Is saved really a synonym for salvation? Do the two words mean the same thing in the Bible? Do they mean the same thing in English? The English definitions of the words saved and salvation are: Save, saved — to rescue from danger or possible harm, injury or loss. Salvation — the act of saving or protecting from harm or loss; the state of being thus saved or protected.

The theological definition is deliverance from the power and penalty of sin. The two words do not mean the same thing in English but they are so closely related that Bible authorities use them interchangeably. Do they do this because they misunderstand what the Bible is telling us about salvation? When is a person rescued from the danger of sin?

It is the forgiveness of sins at baptism in Yahshua's Name that rescues (saves) the individual from the danger of losing salvation.

What is it that delivers the baptized believer from the power and penalty of sin? It has to be the influence of Yahweh's Holy Spirit in the heart (grace) that is given by the laying on of hands after baptism! This is salvation in the present tense.

Save and Salvation in Greek

Do the Greek words translated saved and salvation mean the same as the English words? *Sozo* (Strong's No. 4982) is the Greek word translated saved in most New Testament Scriptures. *Sozo* means to save or rescue. Matthew 10:22 indicates that Bible writers did equate being saved with the resurrection experience of entering into eternal life.

The person who endures to the end will be rescued, not from transgression of the law, but from bondage

in the flesh which is enmity to Yahweh and His law.

To receive this salvation a person must not only endure in faith (conviction of the truth and the assurance of receiving the promise), but also in righteousness in Yahweh's eyes, which is obedience to His law. It is obedience that brings forth fruits of repentance and proof of our love for Yahweh, 1John 5:3.

Soteria (Strong's No. 4991) is the Greek word translated "salvation." Strong says *soteria* means "rescue," "safety," and "deliver." These meanings are about the same as *sozo*, but Thayers Greek-English Lexicon says that *soteria* means "deliverance, preservation, or safety."

It is deliverance from bondage in the flesh that the person who overcomes will experience as being "born again" at the resurrection. Entering into eternal life is generally the only thing associated with the word "salvation" regardless of whether or not the salvation referred to in the Bible is the end-time experience.

This confusion does not result from mistranslation, but from misunderstanding the meaning and usage of the word. There is a present-tense usage of the word salvation in the sense of being delivered from bondage to sin, and a future tense in the sense of being delivered from bondage in the flesh to the world.

Israel's deliverance from bondage in Egypt is salvation in the past tense and a type of the deliverance (salvation) Yahweh's people expect to experience in the future. The time between Moses and the first coming of the Messiah typifies the time in which we live, meaning the time between the first salvation with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the second salvation with the Second Coming of the Messiah in the Spirit at the resurrection.

Yahweh does not wish any should die the second death. He

has therefore preserved the writings of the prophets and apostles for our study so that His people may understand the dangers that threaten our future salvation. The past is no threat to a person who has received the first salvation (deliverance from bondage to sin).

It is the misunderstanding of our New Covenant relationship with Yahweh that endangers a person's future salvation. This misunderstanding gives Satan a decided advantage over baptized believers. For this reason, this exposition will not say much about the details of salvation, but will concentrate upon the misunderstandings that result from teaching man's doctrines about salvation.

Examples Reveal the Distinction

Read Matthew 19:16-21 and think about the way in which the words "saved" and "salvation" are misapplied. When the young man asked Yahshua what he must do for eternal life, Yahshua told him to obey the commandments. The man's response was that he had obeyed the commandments from his youth and he asked what he still lacked. Yahshua's response was, in effect, if you want to be perfect then sell your possessions and follow Me.

Why didn't the man ask, "What must I do to be saved?" Why didn't Yahshua simply say, "If you want salvation, follow Me"?

The answer is that the man wasn't asking to be rescued from sin. He wanted to know what he must do to be born again! Neither was Yahshua talking about deliverance from sin. He was telling the man to obey the commandments and if he wanted to be perfect in obedience, he should rid himself of material possessions that prevented him from following Yahshua.

Now read Acts 2:22-39. When the crowd asked Peter, "What shall

we do?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Yahshua the Messiah for the forgiveness of sin and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Baptism rescues men from the danger of sin - saved! The gift of the Holy Spirit is deliverance from the bondage of sin — salvation!

Yahshua and the young man were talking about a future salvation — deliverance from bondage in the flesh that will occur at the resurrection. Peter and the crowd were talking about something that happens now and makes the day it happens the day of salvation. They were talking about deliverance from bondage to sin.

Read 2 Corinthians 6:2 again. This is only one example of how misunderstanding the concepts of "saved" and "salvation" leads people into believing that Yahshua and Peter were referring to the same thing but weren't, and how even scholars think of "saved" and "salvation" as synonyms, but they aren't.

Our dissertation on grace ended with, "The Spirit dwells in the believer's heart and the individual's spiritual influence comes directly from the heart. Yahweh's grace!" It was pointed out that this influence is evident in a person's way of life.

Knowing that the New Testament writers were not referring to "unmerited forgiveness of sin" when they wrote the word translated grace, and knowing what sin, law, and faith meant to them, we should be able to study out and understand what they are telling us about salvation.

Objections no doubt will be raised to our understanding of salvation and the danger of losing it. So will the claim that our Scriptures are twisted in an effort to support what many will consider heretical ideas.

The loudest and most vociferous objections will probably come from

people who seldom object to Scriptures quoted out of context with meaning twisted to support man's doctrines. Efforts to untwist Scriptures back to their original meaning are most strongly resisted by those who fear having their complacency disturbed.

The reader is not asked to believe the ideas presented here; only to use them in a study of Scriptures to see whether some very puzzling aspects of faith, grace, and salvation do not vanish when they are applied.

Passages All Agree

The message of truth is taught to people who have grown beyond being "babes in the Word" by taking a little from here and a little from there.

Thus, by intersecting a line from Scriptures that speak of salvation in one place with a line that speaks of salvation in another place, we come up with the following summation from Ephesians 2:1-10 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 and 6:2.

As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient... gratifying the cravings of a sinful nature...we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His love for us, Yahweh, Who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Messiah even when we were dead in transgressions.... And Yahweh raised us up with Messiah and seated us with Him...in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Messiah Yahshua. For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of Yahweh, not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are Yahweh's workmanship, created

in Messiah Yahshua to do good works, which Yahweh prepared in advance for us to do.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from Yahweh who reconciled us to Himself through the Messiah and gave us a ministry of reconciliation: that Yahweh was reconciling the world to Himself in Messiah, not counting men's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Messiah's ambassadors, as if Yahweh were making the appeal through us...we urge you not to receive Yahweh's grace in vain. For he says, 'In the time of My favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of Yahweh's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Knowing what the words translated "faith," "grace," "law," and "salvation" meant to Bible writers, we can understand that the expression, "It is by grace you have been saved through faith" does NOT mean we have received salvation by unmerited forgiveness of sin.

Spirit Bestows Righteousness

We should understand that it is by Yahweh's divine influence that He rescued us from the danger of eternal death because of our conviction that Yahshua is the Messiah and our assurance that Yahshua will raise us from death in the resurrection. We receive unmerited forgiveness of sin at baptism and it is forgiveness of sin that reconciles us with Yahweh.

Before baptism we were objects of His wrath because we served the spirit of disobedience to satisfy our sinful natures. It is Yahweh's Spirit that strengthens us and opens our eyes and minds to distinguish good from evil, Hebrews 5:14. It is Yahweh's Spirit that enables us to discern between the righteous and the

wicked, between those who serve Yahweh and those who do not, Malachi 3:18.

Forgiveness of sin is a gift given through the Spiritual influence (grace) of Yahshua the Messiah, Romans 5:15-17. We did not earn forgiveness of sin by our own efforts to obey Yahweh's law. It was given because we repented (turned away from) our transgressions and accepted Yahshua's sacrifice as our sin offering.

We then received another gift through the abundance of Yahweh's influence (grace). This gift is righteousness. It is the influence of Yahweh's Spirit that enables us to continue in righteousness by obedience to the law

We do not retain this righteousness by our own efforts any more than we gained it. If we resist Yahweh's Spirit and turn back to serving the spirit of disobedience we will lose the gift that we are commanded to allow to reign (be the dominating influence and have supreme control) in our lives, Romans 5:17.

This is why Paul can say in Romans 7:6,

We have been released from the law so that we serve in a new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

The meaning has to be that we have been removed or taken away.

He can't possibly mean that Yahweh has set aside the law for those whom He has given His Spirit. If he did, Paul couldn't say, "Therefore do not let sin [transgression of the law] reign [dominate and control] your mortal body so that you obey its [sin's] evil desires," Romans 6:12.

Can the phrase "serve in a new way of Spirit" mean anything other than "obey the spiritual intent of the law" rather than merely the written letter? We are created in Messiah to do good works and to be ambassadors in a ministry of reconcilia-

tion. This is the same ministry mentioned in 2 Corinthians 3:6, where we are told that Yahweh has made us ministers of a New Covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

All baptized believers in the New Covenant are Yahshua's ambassadors and expected to do good works in the ministry of reconciling the world to Yahweh.

What are the good works we are to do in this ministry? They are to bear witness to the truth and, by example, demonstrate that obedience to the law is not an unbearable burden.

Why is it that people are always quick to associate "the letter kills" with the letter of the law, but never comprehend that the Spirit gives life through the spiritual law, Romans 7:14?

Spiritual Body Never Vacant

"Submit yourselves, then, to Yahweh. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James writes in 4:7. Paul writes, "Quench not the Spirit" (KJV). The NIV translation of 1 Thessalonians 5:19 reads, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire." Satan's spirit is the spirit of disobedience.

It follows that Yahweh's Spirit can be considered the Spirit of obedience. Quench. Resist. These words are telling us that the believer can negate either spirit.

Yahweh does not force even a baptized believer to obey Him. There isn't a single Scripture that says, even by implication, that Yahweh forced anyone to obey His law, not even Yahshua the Messiah. The body is a spiritual temple that is never vacant (1 Cor. 6:19). It is either occupied by Yahweh's Spirit of obedience, or it is occupied by Satan's spirit of disobedience.

When the spirit of disobedience is resisted by repenting of sin and turning to be baptized in Yahshua's Name, the evil spirit leaves. The

temple is cleansed by forgiveness of sin and Yahweh's Holy Spirit moves in. From the moment the spirit of disobedience is forced out, Satan never ceases to tempt the believer to resist (quench) Yahweh's Spirit and willfully turn back to become enslaved again by sinning (transgressing the law).

If the Spirit of obedience is in turn forced out by the uncleanness of continued sinning, the evil spirit returns and the person's spiritual condition is worse than it was before baptism, Matthew 12:43-45.

Yahweh has promised that He will not allow Satan to tempt anyone beyond his ability to resist the temptation, and He has also promised that He will always provide a way for the tempted individual to avoid sinning.

We also have Yahweh's promise that He will never fail us or leave us, Hebrews 13:5. Hence, we should understand that once we become indwelt by Yahweh's Spirit of obedience, that He will never withdraw His Spirit influence (grace) from us unless we willfully quench that influence — putting the Holy Spirit out of the temple of our body. People who believe that Hebrews 13:5 means that Yahweh's Spiritual influence will abide with them if they continue to sin after learning the truth are ignoring Hebrews 10:26-27.

Pulled Back and Forth

Read what Paul wrote to the Galatians in 4:8-11. These people must have been unwittingly quenching Yahweh's Spirit, for he said to them,

Formerly, when you did not know Yahweh, you were slaves to those who by nature are not elohim. But now that you know Yahweh — or rather are known by Yahweh — how is it that you are turning back to those weak, miserable principles [basic principles of the world, verse 3]. Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are ob-

serving special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

Before Paul preached the Good News to these people, they had been following the ways of the world in gratifying the cravings of their sinful natures. After baptism and receiving Yahweh's grace, they began following in Yahshua's footsteps and observing Yahweh's Feasts, Sabbaths, and New Moons.

Paul is not upbraiding them for keeping Yahweh's days. He is warning them that by clinging to or turning back to worldly ways they are in danger of becoming enslaved again by the spirit of disobedience.

Paul's statement would have been much less ambiguous and not so seemingly contradictory to other statements and actions if he had simply said, "Now that you are observing special days, months, and seasons, why are you turning back to the miserable principles and practices of the world? I fear I have wasted my efforts on you."

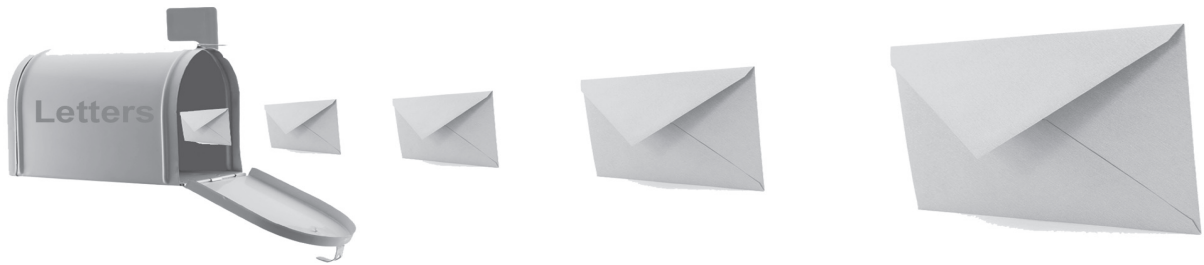
The day we were baptized into Yahshua's Name was the day we received Yahweh's favor and reconciliation by forgiveness of our sins. The day the Holy Spirit entered into the temple (our body) was the day of our salvation in the sense of deliverance from bondage to sin.

We have not yet been born again! We are still in the flesh and waiting for the end-time salvation that will deliver us from this bondage to the flesh. To be "born again" (correctly, "begotten from above"), one first must be made a spirit being, John 3:6, 8.

That deliverance will occur at the resurrection. Read I Corinthians 15:46.

As in almost everything else with a dual meaning in the Bible, there are two salvations. The first is physical and the second spiritual.

Elder Ralph Henrie, deceased



Greetings in the name of Yahweh our Father and Yahshua our Redeemer. I just want to thank you for the material that I've received from you so far. It has helped me tremendously in my studies. I've also gotten a more consistent walk with the Messiah. I can feel Yahweh driving me by His Spirit to have a more intimate relationship with Him through Yahshua. So thanks for making this material available to me.

— **DL, AL**

Peace be with you brethren as another Feast of Weeks closes. I trust yours was a blessing as well. I look forward to hearing about it. I want to thank you for all your fine literature I have read in the past and I request to be added to your mailing list to receive my own copy of your magazine and a newsletter, if you have one. I'm zealous to receive myself to be better equipped to address certain questions that do follow my studies.

— **NL, FL**

I thank you in the name of Father Yahweh for the work you are doing. I have been reading your mini-study on the Sabbath and see that all you are saying is truth. I am somebody who believes in the Sabbath. I read a mini-study about the Feasts of Lev. 23 and I want you to show me the ways to keep them.

— **BO, Ghana (West Africa)**

I want you to know that the issue of your magazine, YAIY Beacon, spoke to my heart through the articles "Suicide is Not the Answer" and "On time." These were two articles I needed at my time of need. And for that I thank you all.

— **TN, TX**

I was relieved to get the new set of DVDs in the mail yesterday. I watched the first on New Moon and found out that I have observed Holy Days on the wrong days for years. Thank you very much. (e-mail)

— **DL, TN**

Shalom from the assembly here in Ohio. I truly thank you for sending me your wonderful magazine. Please keep up the good work and may Yahweh continue to bless and watch over you.

— **NP, OH**

Greeting unto you all in the Messiah Yahshua. Thank you for the Beacon, the Newsletter, and mini-study. They are a great blessing unto me seeing that I want to know more of Yahweh's ways to obey Him.

— **RP, VA**

I want to note that I'm grateful to receive your magazine, YAIY Beacon. There's always something to learn when reading it.

— **RO, CA**

A Hebrew acquaintance of mine showed me an article in the YAIY Beacon magazine called "Mistaken Identification" and that article blew my whole world apart. The precise information I retrieved from that article was of the utmost importance to me because I received an education in paganism and idolatry. I can't thank this magazine enough for its presentation and its contents. I would like to receive this magazine.

— **MC, FL**

Thank you one more time for the magazine. The magazine has blessed me so much.

— **RC, Brazil**

First I would like to thank you for your magazine. WOW! What a blessing with so much information in the magazines. Thanks so very much.

— **CC, OH**

First, I would love to give glory, praise and honor in spirit and in truth to our Heavenly Father Yahweh Elohim for He alone is worthy of our praise. Second, I would love to thank the ministry of YAIY for your effort in spreading the good news of the word of Yahweh. I would like to continue receiving the great magazine, YAIY Beacon, that is so full of Yahweh's truth.

— **CC, CA**

Thank you so much for sending us your magazine, it is really a big help in spreading the truth. We really appreciate it. It gives us more knowledge about the truth. More people will know the truth because your magazine will serve as our proof in everything we share to every people. (e-mail)

— **MS, Philippines**

Your ministry has been an eye opener for me and the true gospel is being spread throughout the planet. Thank you for helping truth seekers contend for the original belief against false teachings.

— **RA, GA**

I thank you for what you have been doing for us in Nigeria, especially in Eket, Akwa Ibom State. Yahweh bless you. (e-mail)

— **IM, Nigeria**

Greetings fellow brothers and sisters. I would like to take this time to thank you so much for all the literature you have sent to me. I have learned and grown so much in the faith in the past two years. Yahweh has blessed me with much happiness.

— **JP, OH**

I really enjoy the literature you have sent me. Your literature gives me hope and encouragement. Thank you so much. — **TM, MO**

Thank you so much. My husband and I are growing in the truth as our heavenly Father sees fit daily. We praise and give glory to YHWH and Yahshua the Messiah and watch for His soon return. Halleluyah, Amein!!! (e-mail) — **HP, OR**

Thank you for the Newsletter and the tracts. WOW! These are what we need for the group of brothers here. We have many seeking the Truth! — **EB, WA**

Greetings. I would like to express my great appreciation for sending me your mini-study. I am greatly amazed by your work contained therein spiritually enlightening materials. It was very generous of you and I look forward to receiving the subsequent issues of your publication YAIY Beacon.

— **AS, Philippines**

I am writing to you on behalf of your magazine. I find your magazine to be very educating and encouraging. I love it and I count it to be a blessing to me.

— **JG, TX**

Thank you for providing resources. It just seems practical to believe that Yahshua who was born a Jew would have spoken Hebrew and Aramaic and that the new covenant scriptures would have been originally presented in the Hebrew tongue! Many thanks for your fine organization. (e-mail)—**LR, NY**

I tell you the articles in the Beacon are so powerful! And they are encouraging me to strive after Yahshua with an ever deeper longing to be like Him in every way. — **DJ, GA**

Awesome site. (e-mail)

— **PJ, TX**

Hope this finds YHWH brethren in Yahshua well in spirit and health. I'm a grateful recipient of your literature, and would appreciate your support to further YHWH's truth and your ministry. I conduct Bible studies at a homeless shelter on a weekly basis. I've been speaking to the shelter brethren about the sacred names of our Heavenly Father and His Son. I further plan to introduce them to the truths of YHWH's weekly and annual Sabbaths. To this end I'd appreciate your support with literature so they can study and grow in the grace and knowledge of Yahshua. (e-mail) — **RE Sr, TX**

Thank you for the mini-studies you recently sent. They are awesome! I will be eagerly sharing them with my children. — **TF, AR**

Someone left a copy of the "Beacon" in the chapel on this unit. One of the guys in my/our bible study group brought it to our meeting. We were all impressed and received "Light" from it. I am going to ask my daughter to download some of your literature and send it to me. It is great to see the truth in print.

— **JH, TX**

I am thankful to have found your site. It is good to understand there are others out there who believe. (e-mail) — **KJ, WA**

I am ever so grateful for the YAIY Beacon as it is always very informative on the yearly Feast days. Also, I enjoy the monthly newsletters. May our Heavenly Father Yahweh bless all of you at YAIY and keep you always in His loving care. — **GG, CA**

I am very much interested to study this magazine and make known many new things which are interesting. Thank you. (e-mail) — **GJ, India**

<**Truth** from page 16>

Satan's Substitute

The Feast of Tabernacles is a seven day festival, the first day being a high day. This feast is immediately followed by the Last Great Day, another high day. The total number of days involved is eight. What Satan has done is take a seven day period of time starting with December 25, celebrated as a holiday, and followed that seven day period of time with January 1, another holiday celebrated by churchianity. This eight day period of time is what Satan has substituted for the Feast of

Tabernacles followed by the Last Great Day.

With many of the world today believing that our Savior was born on December 25, how perfect an imitation Satan has made to make the masses replace a season holy unto Yahweh with a pagan substitution. So, whom should you follow, man or Yahweh? Each of us has that choice to make. As Deut. 30:19 says, "Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

What Say You?

Some people will say that Christmas and Santa Claus are for the children. When the chil-

dren grow up they will find out that Santa Claus is a figment of one's imagination. They are told a lie. He exists only in the minds of people. The same can be said to anyone that believes that our Savior Yahshua was born on December 25.

History does not record His birth date nor does Scripture. But scriptural study will show that He was born in the fall of the year during the Feast of Tabernacles. What the world believes is nothing more than the ceremonies tied to pagan beliefs.

Elder Roger G. Meyer



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"Love one another..."
"Truth came through Yahshua the Messiah..."
"What is His Name?"

"I will walk in Your truth..."

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