

Christmas, Easter and other festivals of the church calendar were never ordained by God, but were simply heathen celebrations dressed up in Christian clothing.

We find a surprising similarity between the following three features of the traditional church:

- Its central doctrine - the Trinity
- Its central symbol - the Cross
- Its central festival - Christmas

All three of these have their origins in heathen worship and in Babylon.

I have explained this in

- [The Trinity in Church Tradition, Scripture and History](#)
- [The Cross in Church Tradition, Scripture and History](#)

Appendix - Birthdate of Jesus

Was Jesus born on December 25th? Definitely not! Two Bible chronology students, Arthur Ware and Frank Paine, use powerful arguments to show that Jesus was born on October 29th in the year 1 BC. Their proof is based on the discovery of perfect time patterns connecting all the major events of Scripture. They assume (as others have done) that Jesus was born at the Festival of Tabernacles. John 1:14 says: *'The word was made flesh and tabernacled among us.'* This would explain why both Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem. Mary would go for a festival, but not just for taxation. It would also explain why there was no room in the guest room, as large numbers of pilgrims converged on Jerusalem requiring accommodation. In 1 BC Tabernacles fell on October 29th and that date is found to harmonise perfectly with intricate patterns of other dates. (See [Bible Chronology](#) for more on this.)

Independent confirmation of an October date comes from comparing [Luke 1:5](#) with [1 Chronicles 24:10](#). In Luke we see that Zechariah served in the division of Abijah, and in Chronicles we see that the division of Abijah was 8th out of 24 in the year. This would place it in the 4th month. If John the Baptist was conceived in the 4th month, he must have been born nine months later in the 1st month. Jesus, being six months younger, was born in the 7th month, the month of Tabernacles.

Jesus perfectly fulfilled every aspect of the law. What would be more appropriate than for him to be born at Tabernacles and die at Passover?

Also Bethlehem nights would be too cold for shepherds in December, but October would be fine.

Christmas and other Church Festivals

Lent

Christmas and Easter are the two best known festivals of the church calendar. Other festivals like Lent also have heathen origins.

In the church calendar, Lent is a period of 40 days leading up to Good Friday and Easter. It is supposed to commemorate the 40 day fast of Jesus in the wilderness. In fact Jesus' fast took place in the Autumn at the beginning of his ministry.

Like Christmas and Easter, there is no mention of observing Lent anywhere in the Bible. The name Lent comes from an old word meaning the Spring season.

Some people suggest the origin of the Lenten fast is the weeping for the death of the heathen god Tammuz (mentioned in [Ezek 8:14-15](#))

Hot cross buns, eaten the day before the start of Lent, go back to other ancient heathen customs.

Sunday

In the Old Covenant, God ordained Saturday as the Sabbath or day of rest. Jesus and his disciples all attended the synagogue on the Sabbath.

At the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325 the Roman Emperor Constantine and the Catholic Church officially proclaimed Sunday as the day of rest, replacing the Jewish Sabbath.

Sunday, obviously, was the day of the sun god.

Other Festivals

I have focused on Christmas, Easter and Lent, but other church festivals also have heathen origins. Alexander Hislop's classic book [The Two Babylons](#) gives large amounts of tedious detail illustrating that every festival in the church's calendar goes back to ancient heathen worship.

Summary

We may then summarise our findings. The festivals of the Old Covenant were solemnly ordained and commanded by God. They pointed forward to spiritual realities that had not yet been revealed. Jesus himself, the Lamb of God, was the fulfilment of the Passover. Pentecost was wonderfully fulfilled by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the waiting disciples.

In the following centuries, the church lost the spiritual realities of the Jewish festivals and then turned to heathenism to keep its unbelieving members happy.

Bible quotations are taken from the ESV or retranslated

Christmas Today

What about Christmas today? Obviously, Christmas today has two main aspects: the social aspect and the religious aspect.

The social aspect includes a large amount of eating and drinking and large expenditure on presents and Christmas cards. Also for many people it has become a family gathering occasion. Increasingly, people of all religions and none take part and Christmas has become a public holiday in many countries that would not consider themselves Christian. Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists are all happy to attend office Christmas parties and send Christmas cards to their friends.

The religious aspect is more complicated. Most Christians sing Christmas carols and go to church on Christmas day. They want to remember it as the birth of Christ. Many feel that they should encourage people to “put Christ back into Christmas” and that they should use Christmas as an opportunity to bear witness to their faith to others.

I believe that such intentions are well-meaning but totally misguided. The fact is that Christmas is a heathen festival and always was a heathen festival. You can’t “put Christ back” into Christmas any more than you could put him back into Hinduism. He was never in it in the first place. The result would be total confusion.

Easter

Like Christmas, Easter also has heathen origins. The name Easter occurs nowhere in the Bible except in the totally wrong KJV translation of [Acts 12:4](#) where the Greek word is *πάσχα* meaning Passover. The actual word Easter comes from the name of the heathen goddess Astarte of Nineveh.

Astarte was a fertility goddess; hence Easter eggs which are obviously a fertility symbol. Rabbits (Easter bunnies) are also a fertility symbol, due to their ability to multiply rapidly.

Springtime, when Easter occurs, is the great fertile time of the year.

In Matt 12:40, Jesus plainly said, “**For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.**” There is no way that anyone can fit 3 nights between Friday afternoon, when Jesus died, and Sunday morning when tradition says he rose from the dead. The evidence points to his resurrection being at midnight between Sunday and Monday, making Monday the resurrection morning.

Introduction

In the Old Covenant, God gave a calendar of festivals to the Jewish people. The most important of these were Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Jesus and his followers continued to observe these festivals in the New Testament. I have written about these festivals and their spiritual meaning in [The Festivals of Israel](#).

Did God then replace these festivals with the church calendar consisting of Christmas, Lent and Easter and other festivals? I have discussed this question in more detail in [Festivals in the Old Covenant, New Covenant and Church](#).

In this writing, I will examine the origins of these church festivals and how they are observed, beginning with Christmas, followed by Easter and other festivals of the church’s calendar.

Christmas

Once a year the vast majority of professing Christians join hands with their fellow inhabitants of the nominally Christian countries to celebrate Christmas. These celebrations take many different forms, but there is much common ground between believer and unbeliever in giving presents, sending cards to friends and relations, decorating houses with fir trees, holly and mistletoe and paper garlands, and in eating and drinking special food, particularly on the date of December 25th.

Nearly all Christians have accepted this tradition without question from their earliest childhood and seek to make the occasion a remembrance of the birth of the Jesus. They have misgivings about the commercialising and overeating that characterise the season, but have never examined the whole subject in the light of scripture to know the mind of the Lord.

Heathen Origins of Christmas

Almost everything relating to Christmas is heathen in origin.

Mother and Child Worship

Christmas is centred on the worship of the mother and child. This worship originated in Babylon with the mother goddess Semiramis and her child Tammuz. From there, mother and child worship passed into many other religions. Mother and child worship came into the church in the time of the emperor Constantine.

The Date of Christmas

December 21st is the shortest and darkest day of the year. Several different countries held celebrations around this time to encourage the sun to come back up again from its lowest point. The Greeks celebrated it as Dies Natalis Solis Invicti

(Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun). The Romans celebrated December 25th as the Saturnalia, which were celebrations of the Roman god Saturn. There is strong evidence that Jesus was not born in December, but in late October at the Festival of Tabernacles.

Christmas Decorations were also part of the Roman Saturnalia.

Carol Singing also had its origins in the Roman Saturnalia.

Holly and Mistletoe were both used in pagan ceremonies. Holly berries were sacred to the sun god. Mistletoe was used by the druids.

Christmas Trees: decoration of Christmas trees came into Christmas celebrations much later probably coming from Germany in the 16th century; but bringing branches into houses in winter goes back to Egyptian and Roman customs.

Facts about the Birth of Jesus

Many of the commonly accepted facts about the birth of Jesus are wrong.

When was Jesus Born?

As I have already said, Jesus was not born in December. He was almost certainly born near the end of October at the Festival of Tabernacles. Several different facts indicate this. See [Birthdate of Jesus](#) for further details.

Where was Jesus Born?

Where does the Bible say that Jesus was born in a stable? Nowhere!

In Luke 2:7 we read, “And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom”. (The Greek word καταλουμεα (katalouma) translated inn in most Bible versions actually means a guestroom.) Absolutely no mention of a stable or cowshed, or any other animal accommodation. In fact, no animals present!

For a full explanation of this visit [Jesus was not born in a stable](#).

Who came to visit Jesus - and when?

Luke plainly tells us that shepherds came to visit Jesus at his birth ([Luke 2:8-18](#)).

But what about the wise men? or was it kings? Matthew describes them with the Greek word μαγοι or magi in English which relates to the word magician. To call them wise men is misleading and to call them kings is plain wrong. They were probably magicians or astrologers.

How many were there? They brought 3 gifts, but the Bible nowhere says that there were 3 of them.

Matthew writes: “And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh” (Matt 2:11). He describes Jesus as a child (παιδιον) whereas Luke describes him as a *baby* (βρεφος) (“They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the **baby** lying in a manger” (Luke 2:16)). Matthew talks about a house rather than a stable. It is very probable that the magi actually went to Nazareth rather than Bethlehem and arrived there when Jesus was 2 years old. Herod enquired of them exactly when the star had appeared and then killed all the children in Bethlehem up to the age of 2. He did not know where they went when they left Jerusalem.

History of Christmas Observance

When did Christmas observance begin? Jesus told his disciples to remember his death, but did he also tell them to remember his birth? Nowhere in Matthew, Mark, Luke or John!

The early church simply did not observe Christmas. Until the 5th century there was no consensus of opinion as to when it should be observed. Jan 6th and March 25th were rival dates. The time of the winter solstice, originally around Dec 25th, was generally a time of pagan festivity.

In mediaeval times the “merrymaking” aspect became particularly strong. This included eating, drinking, carol singing, dancing and pantomimes. Ceremonies were directed by a man whose official title was the *Lord of Misrule*.

At the time of the Reformation, the main reformers had different opinions. Christmas was clearly a Roman Catholic festival. Zwingli was totally against it. Luther was in favour of remembering it as the birth of Christ. Calvin was somewhere in between. In consequence, Presbyterians were against Christmas and Lutherans were in favour.

Christmas was forbidden in England by act of parliament by the Puritans under Cromwell, but revived with the restoration under King Charles II. In Scotland it has only become a public holiday in the last 30 years.

In the 19th and 20th, centuries, the social aspects of Christmas, such as giving presents and sending cards and eating special foods, became more and more popular.

Several denominations and sects that identify as Christians do not observe Christmas. The best known are probably Presbyterians, Brethren, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses and Quakers.