



The Ghosts of Christmas Past

truth about Christmas

By Daniel Rendelman ravemet@comcast.net

Christmas is haunted with a ghostly past that has nothing to do with the Bible or with true Christianity. History shows that long before the manger scene birth of the Savior, the date of December 25th was already set aside as a high holy day of worship for a pantheon of gods. For example, a Phrygian god named "Attis" predated Christ by at least two hundred years and was worshipped at Vatican Hill. The Greeks would celebrate his birth to the Virgin Nana on December 25th of each year. Then on March 22nd a pine tree was brought into the sanctuary of Cybele for two days of mourning until the resurrection of Attis occurred on the third day at sunrise. Priests of Attis were sworn eunuchs who devoted their time to the preaching of his gospel. Author Henry Chadwick wrote in the book "The Early Church" that there were ongoing clashes between Christians and pagans over the remarkable similarities between the Christ and Attis. Truth be told, Attis wasn't the only god with connections to Christ.

The ancients worshipped the celestial beings like the sun and the moon. During the winter solstice, the sun is at its farthest point south from the equator. This time has become known as the birthday of the sun. The Romans taught the unconquerable sun (Mithras) was born on December 25. Followers of Mithras worshipped weekly on the Sun's day, and recognized his birth by bringing a tree into their homes during the winter. "This is what the LORD says: "Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them. For the customs of the peoples are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter," Jeremiah 10:1-4.

The International Encyclopedia states, "Mithras seems to have owed his prominence to the belief that he was the source of life, and could also redeem the souls of the dead into the

better world ... The ceremonies included a sort of baptism to remove sins, anointing, and a sacred meal of bread and water."

Before Mithras was worship of Krishna. Before Krishna was Horus. Even before the Egyptians worshiped Horus, history tells of a man-god named Osiris that healed the sick, raised the dead, and was even born in a cave on the date of (you guessed it) December 25th.

The Church Father Tertullian argued that the many parallels with Attis and other pagan gods were simply coincidences that should be ignored. But, these facts of mixed worship are absolutely too glaringly obvious for anyone who desires to have a faith of purity. The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church says, "December 25 was the date of the Roman pagan festival inaugurated in 274 as the birthday of the unconquered sun. Sometime before 336 the Church in Rome, unable to stamp out this pagan festival, spiritualized it as the Feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness."

Today, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. Too bad Exodus 23:2 says "thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." As hard as it may be to fathom, Bible believers do not have to continue in Christmas error. There is a better way to worship. Understand that life is shaped by past experiences and surrounding culture. The holidays celebrated, the language spoken, and the food eaten, are all predetermined by the culture a person lives within. For Bible believers, this is identity theft. People think they are Christians, Americans, Lutherans, or Baptists but you are not. You are more.

A person's true identity is found within the pages of the Bible. The Scriptures state, "if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," Galatians 3:29. The original word for "seed" in this verse is "sperma," which means a "physical seed or descendant." Christians are not just spiritual heirs of salvation but direct physical descendants of Abraham.

Abraham had a special relationship with the Almighty, which led to him being blessed above all people. He would be given special land in the Middle East and have physical descendants "as numerous as the stars in the heavens." These blessings were passed to Abraham's son, Isaac and then given to Isaac's son, Jacob. "Be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body," Genesis 35:11.

Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, fathered twelve sons. These twelve sons and their families, became known as the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel isn't just a small sliver of

land in the Middle East. *And Israel isn't just the Jewish people!* Israel is the family of Abraham. This family's bloodline has been scattered all over the world. As Romans 2:29 states, the identity of all disciples is Israel.

History proves that shortly after the rule of King David, the nation of Israel was tragically split in two. In 586BCE the two tribes that made up the Southern Kingdom were taken captive by the Babylonians. 70 years later many of these people returned to the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, and rebuilt the Temple. They kept the Law and sought to worship as prescribed in the Scriptures. Today, the descendants from Judea are known as the "Jews."

In 722BCE the Northern Kingdom, comprised of 10 tribes from Ephraim, were scattered by the Assyrians. These Israelites mixed into the nations. Thus they lost their identity and forgot their Hebrew heritage. They continued to grow and multiply, spreading their bloodline all over the world. A recent NBC News article estimates over a tenth of today's population is directly descended from this group. Today they are known as the "lost 10 tribes of Israel."

The Jewish people began their return to the Land in 1948. As fulfillment to Biblical prophecy in Ezekiel 37 and elsewhere, the lost tribes are slowly returning to their identity as people recognize they are Israel.

The Savior said in John 4:22, "Salvation is of the Jews." This doesn't mean that a person must convert to Judaism. This means the true pathway of faith can be found within the lineage and lifestyle of the Hebrews. All of the promises in the Bible made to Israel are for today and are for you! All of the commandments in the Bible that were given to Israel are also for today and also for you. Being Israel isn't about being Jewish, but recognizing your heritage the Almighty's true plan for man. Such recognition will also lead you to forsaking forbidden practices, like Christmas, and accepting commanded worship days as found in the Scriptures. Christmas doesn't have to haunt you anymore.

To learn more about the Biblical lifestyle visit www.findemet.com.

The "Finding the Truth" series is written by Daniel Rendelman of Emet Ministries. Daniel Rendelman is the found and leader of Emet Ministries and the author of the book "Finding the Truth." He, his wife, and five children live in Newberry, South Carolina. He can be reached at emetministries@gmail.com. Find more teachings, audio messages, videos, and music at www.emetministries.com.