

Is Christmas Scriptural?

The Christian celebration of Christmas had nothing to do with birth of Yeshua the Jewish Messiah who is clearly portrayed in the Gospel of Luke as having been born when the shepherds were in the field, guarding their flocks by night, which indicates that Yeshua was born either late summer or early autumn. In the northern hemisphere this time falls around mid to late September or in a scriptural leap year, as late as mid-October, but definitely not as late as 25th December. None of the Gospels define the exact day on which Yeshua was born nor do even remotely suggest the date was on or near the 25th December. Hence, in recent years many commentators have written extensively on the matter of the origin of the Christmas celebration, with a general consensus that the date set down by the 4th century Christian Church was nothing more than an attempt to win many converts from among the polytheistic (pagan) communities of the Roman Empire, who already had their own celebrations on or around the 25th December.

Secular history suggests that throughout Roman Europe of the 1st to 4th centuries CE, there were many (polytheistic) pagan religious cults, which celebrated the winter solstice calling it "*Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*," (the Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun), which on the Julian calendar, fell on the 21st December. During that same period there was wide spread cultic worship and feasting in favour of Saturnalia, (Golden Age of Saturn), the god of sowing and husbandry, with the celebrations taking place between the 17th - 23rd December. In addition many historians have suggested, that the 25th December, was the celebration of the birthday of Mithras, a Persian deity whose worship penetrated the Roman world in the 1st century BCE. The cult of Mithras was brought to Rome by the military. Therefore, in the midst of all that cultic worship and festivity, the 4th century Christian Church having been ordained as the official State religion of Rome by Emperor Constantine, deemed it was necessary to have it's own festive celebration sometime within the month of December. So, what better event to celebrate than the birth of their Christ? The result was yet another festival was added to the Roman celebratory mix.

Throughout the last 1600 years the Roman and Orthodox Churches have gone on to embrace many of more national customs from communities who had ties back to Roman times. Since the Christian Reformation, until 19th century it would have been difficult to find any "Protestant Christians" who embraced any of the cultic pagan feasts and practices of Roman Europe. But, since the 19th century, Christmas practices have become the norm even for most "Protestant" churches, and woe to anyone who speaks against them. These facts were reinforced in an article from "*USA TODAY*" journal dated 23/12/1983, which states:-

"A broad element of English Christianity considered the Christmas celebration a pagan blasphemy. The Puritans, Baptists, Quakers, Presbyterians, Calvinists and other denominations brought this opposition to early New England and strong opposition to the holiday lasted in America until the middle of the 18th century." Indeed, many Protestants abhorred this pagan day until recent times. Henry Ward Beecher, a Congregationalist, wrote in 1874 of his New England boyhood: "to me Christmas is a foreign day, and I shall die so. When I was a boy I wondered what Christmas was. I knew there was such a time, because we had an Episcopal church in our town, and I saw them dressing it with evergreens, and wondered what they were taking the woods into the church for; but I got no satisfactory explanation. A little later I understood it was a Romish institution, kept by the Roman Church."

Anyone who has the inclination can soon find out for themselves that "Christmas" is a totally non-scriptural festival - with its origin, its trappings, and in all its traditions centred in the cultic practices of the pagan world. No honest person can deny these truths!

How then should we, as Talmidim of Yeshua respond to this non-scriptural pagan festival? The answer lies in Jeremiah 10:1-4, which gives specific instructions to Isra'el in relation to the use of what later became known as the "Christmas Tree" where it says:-

"Hear the word YHVH speaks to you, house of Isra'el! ² Here is what YHVH says: "Don't learn the way of the Goyim (nations), don't be frightened by astrological signs, even if the Goyim are afraid of them; ³ for the customs of the peoples are nothing. They cut down a tree in the forest; a craftsman works it with his axe; ⁴ they deck it with silver and gold. They fix it with hammer and nails, so that it won't move." (Complete Jewish Bible)

Instead of following such practices, we should always look to YHVH Elohim for guidance through His Torah by embracing the cycle of His seven Moedim (designated times of YHVH) as commanded in Leviticus chapter 23. We can also acknowledge, through the celebration of Hanukkah and Purim, that YHVH honours those who were and still are faithful to His Torah. By observing these festivals alone we begin to acknowledge Yeshua HaMashiach (Messiah), as the true light of the world. Further, Luke chapters 1-2 strongly indicate, that he was born on the 1st day of Sukkot, in the year 2 BCE, which would have been mid-September in the Julian Calendar. So, we have no reason at all to embrace the 25th December as the time of his birth.

Shalom

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