

Adapted from a Sermon by Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.
The Real Meaning of Christmas
Exodus 12:21-28
Introduction:

A. A great question in verse 26: "What do you mean by this service?"

1. What did the Passover mean?
2. What does the Lord's Supper mean?
3. What does Christmas mean?

B. To explain the real meaning of Christmas we need to consider:

1. Its Origin.
2. Its Observance

Discussion:

I. The Origin of Christmas.

A. Not in the Bible.

1. No date given for the birth Christ, but December 25 unlikely.
2. No day or service given to remember His birth — Unlike Lord's Supper.

B. A product the apostate Church (cf. Thess. 2:1-4).

1. Catholic marks all over it "Christmas" is Christ + mass.
2. Catholic attempt to "Christianize" pagan observances.

From my notes:

Christmas Traditions

December 25 began to be observed by some Christians as early as the 3rd century

"Covered" some notorious pagan celebrations;

Saturnalia (Dec 17-24);

Birth of the Sun (December 25 the “Birthday of sun” declared by Aurelian (274 A.D.), some say all the way back to time of Nimrod. Eastern churches derided those in the west who chose to observe the day as picking up old pagan sun god rituals.

The “Saint Nicholas” who became associated with it was a bishop of the Roman church in Myra, Asia Minor in the 3rd century. A rich man noted for his liberality and gift giving, later “sainted” by the Catholic Church, he became associated with the observance of Christmas quite naturally.

The “Santa Claus” of English usage comes from the Dutch “SinterKlaas,” a legendary figure based on Saint Nicholas. He is considered the “patron saint” of children. A celebration was held each year on December 6 in his honor. This found its way to the US via the Dutch (New Amsterdam, or New York)

By the 800s Christmas was common in most Roman Catholic churches of Europe.

From article by Kyle Campbell in Navarre Messenger 12-2-18:

It was the practice of the Teuton pagans to worship a god called Odin during which they sacrificed a child before Odin’s “sacred oak.” In the eighth century, Boniface persuaded them to abandon this worship and to cut down a big fir tree, take it home and celebrate around it with their children. The big tree, with its evergreen leaves and top branch pointing straight to heaven, was supposed to represent immortality.

This found its way into English usage by way of Prince Albert of Germany who married into the British royal family and brought the Christmas Tree tradition with him to that country. In 1848 pictures of the royal family in front of a 40-foot decorated tree caught the imagination of Americans and quickly became a tradition here.

Protestant denominations did not all embrace the celebration of Christmas at first. The Puritans of MA passed a law in 1644 to fine anyone found celebrating Christmas 5 shillings. But look at them now...

Christmas as we know it began to take shape in the 1800s:

1823 Clement Clarke Moore published “A Visit from St. Nicholas” better known as “Twas the night before Christmas” introducing us to 8 flying reindeer

1848 Christmas trees became wildly popular

1850 Elves as Santa’s helpers with Louisa May Alcott’s unpublished book “Christmas Elves” but popularized in 1873 with an illustration published in Godey’s Lady’s Book

1857/62 John Henry Hopkins, Jr. “We Three Kings”

1930s a Coca Cola depiction of a rotund Santa in red and white caught hold

1939 Rudolf appears in a book by Robert Lewis May published by Montgomery Ward, and in the song made popular by Gene Autry which hit number 1 on music charts Christmas week 1939

“The Little Drummer Boy” or “Carol of the Drum” by Katherine Kennicott Davis 1941

Another song by Gene Autry in 1950 Frosty the Snowman

The “conspiracy” grows almost overwhelmingly strong.

Sum up the stuff about Sana and compare finding out it isn't true to the facts of Jesus.

II. The Observance of Christmas

A. The religious observance.

1. An unauthorized practice (cf. 2 John 9-11; Matt. 15:9).

2. A presumptuous addition (Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:8,9).

B. The non-religious observance. (Gal 4:8-12 warning against going to Law of Moses; Rom 14:1-6 speaking of personal observance of days and eating certain foods)

1. Non-religious observance of associated customs (cf. Acts 21:20-26; 1 Cor. 9:20-22; 1 Cor. 8:1ff; 1 Cor 10:1ff; Acts 16:3; Gal 2:3)

John 10:22

2. One must be cautious about his influence (cf. 1 Cor. 8:9-13).

Conclusion:

A. Christmas does not mean the birthday of Christ to me.

B. Christmas is just a holiday season to enjoy family and friends.

C. Christmas would be much like the Passover, Pentecost, etc. for Christian living in Jewish state.

Christmas

Christmas, in the Christian church, annual festival held on December 25 to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Scholars believe that the festival is derived in part from rites held by pre-Christian Germanic and Celtic peoples to celebrate the winter solstice.

Christmas festivals have been observed by Christians since the 4th century and incorporate many pagan customs, such as the use of holly and mistletoe. Dutch settlers brought to the Americas the custom of celebrating Saint Nicholas's Eve (December 5) with gift giving. British settlers took over the tradition as part of their Christmas celebration. The name for Santa Claus is derived from Saint Nicholas -- Microsoft Book Shelf Encyclop.