

A Deeply Concerning Look at Christian Festivals and Holy Days

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This is an article that looks at the origins of the festivals and holy days of the Christian calendar about which I have purposed to inquire into the powers that they might wield over the universal congregation of believers who worship our God in Heaven and the Salvation He wrought through the great sacrifice of his Only Begotten Son in payment of the debt of mankind's gross disobedience against the laws and will of God that commenced in the Garden of Eden.

The integrity of this article demands that there be no pretence of denominationalism or religio-asymmetry and focusses our thoughts to understanding that in God's kingdom there is no grey area, but only a singleness of white or black separated by an impassable abyss. I refer of course to the good of God and the evil of Satan.

Our discussion has its roots in Genesis 1:3-4, but this passage is somewhat blurred from having a crisp and obvious array for temporal understanding, so we should take a literal translation from the prose as they were passed down from God to Adam and subsequently down to a time when literacy was introduced into the tribes of Israel by Moses and his scribes. Why I mention this is because of the extreme devastation to the Book of Genesis caused by hermeneutic rules that were universally agreed upon in order to standardise inter-language translations, and has held these particular passages hostage for centuries.

Be very aware though that Genesis is not literature despite many opinions to the contrary. Genesis is in every fact a rhetorical piece of works that has been "recorded" through a rote technique and stored through memory retention by a system utilising a prose construct to build up layers of information one upon the other. It is a master class in information retention and management in the human mind and should be, in the first place, recognised for this.

In later years Moses and his scribes used these rote-taught proses to introduce literacy into the tribes of Israel during the 40 year sojourn in the desert. This also is a master-class of how to bring literacy on such a broad scale into a nation, and in no small way was God in the background encouraging its uptake by the Children of Israel. From a community who could pretty well reel off Genesis by heart, it was the obvious starting point for Moses to introduce the written form of the Hebrew language.

How we look at these early Genesis accounts changes when we recognise that they are very literal and very succinct. Hence it does not follow the rules for

literacy comprehension but oddly is very suited to being translated into other languages. The key to all of Genesis, but in particular to Chapters One and Two is the gear-effect of key words in each prose with particular attention to their construct within a very succinct frame. With less words to become confused in grammatical issues, the Genesis prose are cut to the bone as far as vocabulary and punctuation and therefore are quite accurately understood in a multitude of languages if interpreted literally.

Genesis 1:3-4

*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided
the light from the darkness.
(KJV)*

Before moving off into the meatier discussion, it is important that we understand this above passage. Though its appearance looks benign, it is actually a very powerful statement about God and His very nature. There are some contemporary thoughts that this passage refers to the electromagnetic wave frequency that we call light which emanates from celestial stars; however these can be dismissed because of the sequencing of the Chapter One prose. So God is revealing to humankind that his very essence is light to the world which would be symbolised in the creation order noted in verses Fourteen to Eighteen when our Sun star reached critical mass and fusion occurred.

And when God divided His light from darkness he set in motion a fundamental principle that the two states would never mix, hence light cannot emit darkness and neither for the corollary, darkness cannot emit light. This fundamental principle extends right across the board and in the case of our discussion, good and evil fall under this same rule. Even if disguised, the root, or essence of the state cannot be changed. The powers of evil will always be evil. This is a God-given truth.

So we can ask the question about where a good example of this fundamental rule can be seen, and this provides a perfect segue into our themed article. The history of festivals can be traced right back to Genesis Chapter 4 where Cain and Able offered a sacrifice to God from the fruits of their handiwork. Cain was an agricultural farmer and offered fruits from the ground and Abel's skills were in animal husbandry, and he provided a lamb as an offering. You will obviously note the relevance of Abel's offering.

It was in the period of the exodus from Egypt that festivals commenced to become law for the children of Israel and we note that from Exodus 12:3 and

12:14-20 that the first festival proclaimed was Passover, and also, again, that the substance of that feast is lamb. In all there are seven feasts that come out of Israel's early history plus one other that is not included in the Hebrew canon but is found in the Books One and Two of Maccabees which was a later addition to their festival calendar.

The First Four Feasts

1. Pesach or Passover
2. Unleavened Bread
3. First-fruits
4. Shavuot: the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost

The Remaining Three Feasts

5. Rosh HaShanah: or Feast of Trumpets
6. Yom Kippur: or The Day of Atonement
7. Sukkot: or The Feast of Tabernacles

The Eighth Festival

8. Chanukah: The Festival of Lights

(An excerpt from an article by D R Reagan)

God's plan of salvation for mankind is summed up in these feasts, which were related to Israel's agricultural seasons, and therefore fall into three clusters.

The Spring and Summer Feasts typify the inauguration of redemption, while the Fall Feasts its consummation.

"The first three feasts Passover, Unleavened Bread, and First Fruits occur in rapid succession in the spring of the year over a period of eight days. They came to be referred to collectively as "Passover."

The fourth feast, Harvest, occurs fifty days later, at the beginning of the summer. By New Testament times this feast had come to be known by its Greek name, Pentecost, a word meaning fifty.

The last three feasts Trumpets, Atonement, and Tabernacles extend over a period of twenty-one days in the fall of the year. They came to be known collectively as Tabernacles."

(The Feasts of Israel A Study in Symbolic Prophecy by Dr. David R. Reagan)

The first four feasts have already been fulfilled, the first two by Y'shua Messiah (Jesus Christ) on the actual feast days according to the Hebrew calendar. He was sacrificed on Passover, and resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits. The third Feast of Unleavened Bread carried great significance in light of His

sacrifice, while the Fourth Feast Shavuot, or the Festival of Weeks was again fulfilled on the exact day on what we now call Pentecost.

While we certainly do not know exactly how the other three feasts will be fulfilled, it is perhaps reasonable to surmise that they will be fulfilled in the same manner... on the actual feast day.

However it is important to note that the Feasts that symbolize a sequence of events were given by God in a set chronological order. Therefore the events that they symbolize will take place in the same exact order. I have read way too many interpretations of the Feasts that jump backwards and forwards between them in an effort to make them fit into pre-conceived end time scenarios. What we need to do is make the order of the Feasts our guideline to coming events, instead of scrambling them to fit our ideas. (DR Reagan)

Hanukkah (Chanukah) is one of the few Jewish holidays not mentioned in the Bible. The story of how Hanukkah came to be is contained in Books 1 and 2 of Maccabees, which are not included in Jewish canon.

Historically this brings us right up to the end of the era. From here our Lord was born sometime in the Middle East's summer months, May to September ie "Days of the Sun", contrary to current gentile religious observances that place his birth in the winter period of Israel, and our Lord would go on to become the fulfilment of the Passover observance some thirty three years later.

Following the Lord's capital punishment at the hand of the Pontius Pilate (the Roman Governor and Fifth Prefect of the Roman Province of Judaea) for being the rightful King of Israel and also the rise of Messianic Judaism through the efforts of the Lord's apostolic disciples, the question of what feasts and festivals should be celebrated became an issue.

The position of the old Judaic guard and the new messianic believers maintained the traditional festivals and days, however in time, because of their occupation of the Middle East lands, the Roman Emperor Constantine set up a form of "Nicean Christianity" for religious observance through a network of appointed bishops. And I would make the point here that "this" christian following needs to be distinguished from the Messianic Christendom which was the authentic legacy of the Lord's work and the believers in Him and His Salvation.

My take on this period circa (33 – 350 AD) is that the pathway to ascendancy for the Roman religion was chaotic. It is accepted that from this time that the Roman pontificate, commencing with Linus in the year 67 AD, undertook to

strong-arm this new messianic movement to be under its rule. It appears that the lack of consensus between Rome's appointed bishops was in part due to the Jewish population and the new (and genuine) messianic believers from Jesus' (Y'shua's) discipleship who stuck firmly to the traditional dates of Passover and the other festivals. There is evidence that new non-Jewish immigrants to Jerusalem circa 125 AD stirred up dissent against the traditional Jewish observances and this became the spearhead for what happened next.

We move on in time now to 325 AD where Constantine (the father) is Emperor and the controversy about festival dates had raged on. So bad had it become that under the then pontiff, Sylvester I, Constantine hailed a council of all bishops appointed to the Roman church to come to this Council of Nicea for the purposes to reach a consensus about a number of issues, one of which being the dates of festivals. There were no minutes of this Council so details are scant. However according to Theodoret, Constantine was directly involved at this convocation. Invitees were all of the 1,800 bishops of the then Romanised church within the Roman Empire (about 1,000 in the east and 800 in the west), but a smaller and unknown exact number attended that is thought to be about 300.

It is relevant to point out that Emperor Constantine was a former sun-worshiper who professed a conversion to Christianity, though his subsequent actions strongly suggest the "conversion" was more of a political move than a genuine heart change. This will become more relevant shortly. Constantine subsequently named himself Bishop of the Roman Church.

We see prior to the 325 convocation that Constantine enacted the first civil law regarding Sunday observance in A.D. 321. Here he dispensed with the God ordained Day of Observance (Saturday) and replaced it with Sunday. A change that is still today maintained by nearly all creeds of Christian congregations, even though Sunday is named after the pagan Sun god Sol. (There are no coincidences here)

On the venerable day of the sun let the magistrate and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country however, persons engaged in agricultural work may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain growing or for vine planting; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.

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(Schaff's History of the Christian Church, vol. III, chap. 75)

Note that Constantine's law did not even mention Sabbath but referred to the mandated rest day as a "the venerable day of the sun." And how kind he was to allow people to observe it as it was convenient. Contrast this with God's command to observe the Sabbath "even during the plowing season and harvest" (Exodus 34:21)! Perhaps the church leaders noticed this laxity as well, for just four years later, in A.D. 325, Pope Sylvester officially named Sunday "the Lord's Day," and in A.D. 338, Eusebius, the court bishop of Constantine, wrote, "All things whatsoever that it was the duty to do on the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week) we (Constantine, Eusebius, and other bishops) have transferred to the Lord's Day (the first day of the week) as more appropriately belonging to it."

So let me make another statement of fact. When God ordained the seventh day to be Sabbath, he did so for the entirety of humankind's existence. The nomination of this day goes right back to creation:

Genesis 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

No mere man has God given authority to change God's ordinances and here we get to the pithy bit of our article. For two reasons this Constantine decree is foul. Firstly, as noted, a mere man does not have any Godly authority, and secondly God would not allow his holy observance day to be put under a Godless spiritual power and moved to a day that celebrates the pagan Sun god Sol. And if you don't think so, I think you are in trouble. Now do you see why it is widely held that Constantine did not have a repentance and re-birth of Spirit. He just went straight on with his old pagan ways. And this is just the first instance.

Moving back up to the Nicean Council convocation of 325 AD, which interestingly is boasted to be the first ecumenical gathering in history – but note that it was only ecumenical within the Roman church itself, and so we see Constantine in a very different light to what some historians would have us believe.

The next move Constantine made was to quell a disquiet that had arisen with the bishops in relation to Passover. Clearly the non-Jewish Nicean "Christians" did not respect the God of Israel, a sentiment that we find throughout the whole of the Roman occupation of the Middle East, and on the matter of Passover they had longings to engage separately their take on this festival divorced from the authentic God ordained holy observances. It was noted in the history of this

period that the Jewish Passover ordinances were strict and did not sit well with the new non-Jewish clergy.

A general review of commentators had this to say: (Paraphrased by author)

These new gentile Christians who commenced settling in Jerusalem after AD 135 stirred up a controversy by adopting and promoting Easter Sunday instead of Nisan 14 as the Passover. It symbolised a change from celebrating the drama of redemption to celebrating of death and resurrection through a host of pagan symbols and myths. It was particularly corrupted when hordes of barbarians entered the church adding to the Easter celebrating such superstitious practices as carnival, Lent, the blessing of the fire with the lighting of candles, the Easter bunny, and Easter eggs which were symbols of fertility in worship of the pagan Mother Goddess going back deep into history and in later times it symbolised the pagan temple prostitutes.

The Council of Nicea, AD 325, put an end to the controversy over the date of Easter by decreeing that all Christians should follow the Church of Rome by observing Easter on the 1st Sunday after the 1st full moon of Spring. To ensure that Easter would not be celebrated at the same time as the Jewish Passover, the council decreed that if the Jewish Passover fell on a Sunday, then Easter was to be celebrated on the following one.

According to Theodoret, Constantine stressed the normative role of Scripture: "For the gospels, the apostolic writings, and the oracles of the ancient prophets, clearly teach us what we ought to believe concerning the divine nature. Let, then, all contentious disputation be discarded; and let us seek in the divinely-inspired word the solution of the questions at issue. The question of Easter was amicably resolved."

In a savvy move that would put today's shrewd politicians to shame, the compromise proffered by Constantine was vague, but blandly pleasing: Jesus and God were of the same "substance," he suggested, without delving too much into the nature of that relationship. A majority of the bishops agreed on the compromise and voted to pass the language into doctrine.

Their statement of compromise, which would come to be known as "The Nicene Creed," formed the basis for their Christian ideology. The bishops also used the Council of Nicea to set in stone some church rules that needed clarification, and those canons were the reference point after which all future laws were modelled.

As a final order of business, the bishops decided upon a date for the holiest of Christian celebrations, Easter, which was being observed at different times around the empire. Previously linked with the timing of Passover, the council settled on a moveable day that would never coincide again with the Jewish holiday — the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

Hence, controversially the Roman Empire decreed that Passover would be displaced to a festival called Easter and adopted Easter Sunday instead of Nisan 14 . This was the most audacious move by Constantine to take rule over Christian believers within the Roman Empire and to move the most holy and revered observance, once again ordained by God, and shift it to a date that was then celebrated as the pagan Astarte/Ishtar (Easter – Queen of Heaven). But what I find incredulous is that he believed he had a divine right equal to God.

Moving on now, in an article by Lorraine Day (M D 2006) we find that Easter is most definitely pagan and is of Chaldean (Babylonian) in origin.

The name Astarte is one of the titles of Beltis, the queen of heaven. The name of Astarte was found on the Assyrian monuments by the noted archeologist Layard in the form of Ishtar. We must remember that Semiramis (also known as Ishtar) of Babylon, the wife of Nimrod and mother of Tammuz, was the same goddess worshiped throughout the world under various names, such as the Egyptian fertility god, Artemis, the Roman goddess of licentiousness, Venus, the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite, and the Ephesian, many-breasted fertility god, Diana, as well as many others.

The (Easter) bunny, the oldest pagan symbol of fertility - Semiramis - has absolutely nothing to do with the resurrection of Christ; nor does the Sunrise service. Jesus was resurrected while it was still dark!

John 20:1

"And early came Mary Magdalene, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre."

Sunrise services are for the worship of the Pagan Sun god. In addition, Jesus was not resurrected on Sunday, the first day of the week. Please see the study entitled "Was Jesus Really Resurrected on Sunday?" at www.goodnewsaboutgod.com

One mythological legend says that sometime after Semiramis died, a huge egg dropped from heaven. Out of the egg came a re-incarnated Semiramis, now a goddess. The Babylonian Talmud refers to her as Ishtar, or Easter.

The forty days of Lent symbolize one day for each year of Tammuz' life. This period of time is celebrated in the "Christian" church by giving up something to mourn the death - of Tammuz, the son of the pagan goddess Semiramis!

Ezekiel 8:12,18 tells us what God thinks about any festival that recognizes Tammuz:

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say, The LORD seeth us not; the LORD hath forsaken the earth. He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations that they do.

Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the LORD'S house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz.

Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

And he brought me into the inner court of the LORD'S house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the LORD, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.

Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here? for they have filled the land with violence, and have returned to provoke me to anger: and, lo, they put the branch to their nose.

Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet will I not hear them.

As late as the 19th century, in Great Britain, at Beltan (or the 1st of May) a number of men and women assembled at an ancient Druidical circle of stones near Crieff, to participate in an ancient worship feast to Baal.

The festival of Pasch, or Passover, was very early observed by many professing Christians in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Y'shua (Jesus),

although it cannot be traced back as far as the Apostles. But Pasch was observed by Christians a full month before the festival of Ishtar was celebrated by the Pagans. In addition, the festival of Ishtar (Easter) now observed in churches is far different from the original festival of Pasch.

The syncretism of the Christian Pasch, as observed in Britain by the Christians, and the Pagan Easter enforced by Rome, occurred by violence and bloodshed. But at last, the Festival of the Anglo-Saxon or Chaldean goddess, Ishtar, came to supersede that which had been held in honor of Messiah.

"The hot cross buns of Good Friday, and the dyed eggs of Easter Sunday figured in the Chaldean rites just as they do today. The Æbuns, known by the identical name, were used in the worship of the queen of heaven, the goddess Ishtar, as early as the days of Cecrops, the founder of Athens, that is, 1500 years BEFORE the Christian era. One species of sacred bread which used to be offered to the gods was called ÆBoun." (Hislop, Two Babylons, pg 107.)

Jeremiah 7:18

"The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven.

The hot cross buns are no longer offered, but eaten instead, on the festival of Easter (Astarte - Ishtar).

"The origin of the Pasch (Passover) eggs is just as clear. The ancient Druids bore an egg as the sacred emblem of their order. In the mysteries of Bacchus, as celebrated in Athens, one part of the nocturnal ceremony consisted in the consecration of an egg. "In ancient times, eggs were used in the religious rites of the Egyptians and the Greeks, and were hung up for mystic purposes in their temples. The classic poets are full of the fable of the mystic egg of the Babylonians.

"The occult meaning of the mystic egg of Astarte had reference to the ark during the time of the flood, in which the whole human race was shut up, as the chick is enclosed in the egg before it is hatched. And of course, the egg also refers to birth, or creation.

"Though the deified queen, whom Astarte represented, had no actual existence till some centuries after the flood, yet through the doctrine of metempsychosis, which was firmly established in Babylon, it was easy for her worshippers to be made to believe that, in a previous incarnation, she had lived in the Antediluvian world and passed safely through the waters of the flood. The

Roman Catholic Church then adopted this mystic egg of Astarte, and consecrated it as a symbol of Christ's resurrection." (Ibid pg 109,110.)

The Bible clearly tells us what God's mind is on the memorial of Y'shua's death and resurrection. It is definitely not the pagan celebration of Easter in honour of this pagan god, Ishtar. It is in fact about baptism:

Romans 6:3-6

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?

Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that just as Messiah was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

"For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (rendered inoperative), that henceforth we should not be slaves of sin."

The memorial for Y'shua's (Christ's) death and resurrection is baptism, not Easter! There is no doubt that Easter is a totally Pagan holiday. (Lorraine Day M D 2006)

Let's now talk about Christmas Day. As we all know in this current time this is celebrated almost universally as the birth date of Y'shua (Jesus). It is also a venerated observance in religious convocations, but in similar circumstances to Passover and Easter, it is widely celebrated, albeit not necessarily in reverence by the populous at large. But many will be surprised to know that God has been silent on the identification of a specific day. We know from the gospels that it was summer time in the Middle East, ie winter time in Australia, but not much else. God did not ordain a day of observance for this and there is diverse comment as to why this may be so.

A consensus view is as follows.

In the 3rd century, the date of birth of Y'shua (Jesus) was the subject of both great interest and great uncertainty. Around AD 200, Clement of Alexandria wrote:

There are those who have determined not only the year of our Lord's birth, but also the day; and they say that it took place in the 28th year of Augustus, and in the 25th day of [the Egyptian month] Pachon [May 20] ... Further, others say that He was born on the 24th or 25th of Pharmuthi [April 20 or 21].

In other writing of this time, May 20, April 18 or 19, March 25, January 2, November 17, and November 20 are all suggested. However in the end various factors contributed to the selection of December 25 as a date of celebration, ie it was the date of the winter solstice on the Roman calendar; it was about nine months after March 25, the date of the vernal equinox and was the date of a Roman pagan festival in honour of the Sun god Sol Invictus. This was chosen to be syncretised into the date linked to the conception of Y'shua (Jesus).

Sol Invictus ("Unconquered Sun") was the official sun god of the later Roman Empire and a patron of soldiers. In 274 AD the Roman emperor Aurelian made it an official cult alongside the traditional Roman cults. Scholars disagree about whether the new deity was a refoundation of the ancient Latin cult of Sol, a revival of the cult of Elagabalus or completely new. The god was favored by emperors after Aurelian and appeared on their coins until Constantine I. The last inscription referring to Sol Invictus dates to AD 387, and there were enough devotees in the 5th century that Augustine found it necessary to preach against them.

The theory dating from the 12th century, which the near-solstice date of 25 December for Christmas was selected because it was the date of the Roman festival of Dies Natalis Solis Invicti (Birthday of the Unconquered Sun) is challenged by some Christian scholars. Different explanations for the date similarity are considered to be "academically thoroughly viable hypotheses" by some and both theories have supporters, with some claiming that the festival of Dies Natalis Solis Invicti was later syncretized with Christmas

Invictus ("Unconquered, Invincible") was an epithet for several deities of classical Roman religion including the supreme deity Jupiter, the war god Mars, Hercules, Apollo, and Silvanus. It had been in use from the 3rd century BC. The Roman cult to Sol is continuous from the "earliest history" of the city until the institution of "Romanised" Christianity as the exclusive state religion. Scholars have sometimes regarded the traditional Sol and Sol Invictus as two separate deities, but the rejection of this view by S. E. Hijmans has found supporters.

The Roman gens Aurelia was associated with the cult of Sol. After his victories in the East, the Emperor Aurelian thoroughly reformed the Roman cult of Sol,

elevating the sun-god to one of the premier divinities of the Empire. Where previously priests of Sol had been simply sacerdotēs and tended to belong to lower ranks of Roman society, they were now pontifices and members of the new college of pontifices instituted by Aurelian. Every pontifex of Sol was a member of the senatorial elite, indicating that the priesthood of Sol was now highly prestigious. Almost all these senators held other priesthoods as well, however, and some of these other priesthoods take precedence in the inscriptions in which they are listed, suggesting that they were considered more prestigious than the priesthood of Sol. Aurelian also built a new temple for Sol, bringing the total number of temples for the god in Rome to (at least) four. He also instituted games in honor of the sun god, held every four years from A.D. 274 onwards. (These are the roots of our modern day Olympic games.)

Emperors portrayed Sol Invictus on their official coinage with a wide range of legends, only a few of which incorporated the epithet invictus, such as the legend SOLI INVICTO COMITI, claiming the Unconquered Sun as a companion to the Emperor, used with particular frequency by Constantine. Statuettes of Sol Invictus, carried by the standard-bearers appear in three places in reliefs on the Arch of Constantine. Constantine's official coinage continues to bear images of Sol until 325/6. A solidus of Constantine as well as a gold medallion from his reign depicts the Emperor's bust in profile twinned (jugate) with Sol Invictus, with the legend INVICTUS CONSTANTINUS. Constantine decreed (March 7, 321) dies Solis—day of the sun, "Sunday"—as the Roman day of rest (Codex Justinianus 3.12.2)

The idea that a faction of Christians chose to celebrate the birth of Jesus on 25 December because this was the date of an already existing festival of the Sol Invictus was expressed in an annotation to a manuscript of a work by 12th-century Syrian bishop Jacob Bar-Salibi. The scribe who added it wrote: "It was a custom of the Pagans to celebrate on the same 25 December the birthday of the Sun, at which they kindled lights in token of festivity. In these solemnities and revelries the [Romanised] Christians also took part. Accordingly when the doctors of the Church perceived that these Romanised "Christians" had a leaning to this festival, they took counsel and resolved that the true Nativity should be solemnised on that day."

This idea became popular especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 20th century, however, the view that Christmas was set by the date of Dies Natalis Solis Invicti has been challenged by some scholars. According to a discussion from the Church of England, for example, "On this question there are two schools of thought. The older view is that these two dates represent christian adaptation of the respective winter solstice dates in the West and East, which were already important pagan festivals. Those who hold this view cite the

celebrations connected with Apollo, Mithras and Dionysius with their themes of birth and rebirth, and the coming of the deity to dwell with his followers. In Rome by 274 AD the winter solstice was a public holiday in honour of Sol Invictus, the unconquered sun. But either way, the 25th of December is most definitely a day of pagan celebration.

So once again we see the Roman Empire's pontificate gradually undertaking religious syncretism of all of the holy observances instituted by God for the children of Israel into long established pagan festivals. We may well ask if this is really OK with God, after all, nearly every Christian church in the Western world today has adopted the syncretisations of all that is holy to God into long held pagan rites. This is disgraceful and the long and the short of it is - God has expressed a very dark view of this practise and those who promote it.

This is what God has said to us:

Deuteronomy 12:28-32

Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God.

When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, 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.

1Corinthians 10:18-21

Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?

What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing?

But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

1Thessalonians 5:21-23

*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
Abstain from all appearance of evil.
And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Isaiah 1:14-20

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.

And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Is there any doubt about what has occurred to God's divine order over the past two thousand years? I strongly believe that moving the day of observance for Passover was a desecration of that God ordained holy observance and that the moving of the holy seventh day to be on the day of observance for the sun god Sol were conspiratorially instituted. I am in no doubt that the forces of evil were in play here and I see very clearly that just these three examples above are

evidence enough to be a wake-up call to every soul within the universal congregation of believers in the God of Israel.

But the most shocking revelation that has come from this short study is even more horrendous than what we have already discussed. I am of the opinion that most professing Christians are purposely not made aware of the extent to which this religious syncretisation has impacted worship in the churches today. I will no longer wonder about why the congregation of believers has lost its powers, I will no longer wonder why there is such a massive decline in church numbers and I will no longer wonder why the Satanic influences have invaded and occupied the contemporary religious movements and are drawing thousands of young and naïve souls to their demise. The situation in the world today is dire.

I have looked at all of the festivals and Days of Observance that are celebrated in the mainstream Christian (protestant) liturgical calendar which include:

1. Advent
2. Epiphany
3. First Vespers
4. Christmas Day
5. Lent
6. Shrove Tuesday
7. Holy Week Palm Sunday
8. Holy Week Maundy Thursday
9. Easter
10. Ascension Day
11. Pentecost

Plus :-

- a. Trinity Sunday
- b. All Saints Day (Halloween)
- c. Harvest Festival

Every single one of these festivals have in some form undergone religious syncretisation with a pagan festival or ritual. There is not one that we can honestly face God with hand on heart and say we have been faithful to His word.

What God is thinking right now is perhaps too horrible to contemplate and somewhere at some time there will be a consequence. So let's examine just what the real effect is of syncretisation on the God ordained holy days for observance. If for some reason you have issue with the fact that these are all Jewish holy days then you need to remember that Y'shua (Jesus) was the

quintessential Adamic Hebrew of all time. He was without any question the most legitimate King of all Israel and of all things Hebrew. This is undisputed seeing as his entitlement to the Royal crown was his crime for which the Roman Governor put him to death. And of course the whole bible, indeed the whole of creation is about being (in current vernacular) Jewish.

Throughout the entire history of the Hebrew nation and its lands, God has been strict in holding this nation to a very high standard. Whilst they were under law and several times under corrective punishment, the rest of the world was taking a daily tour with fanfare to the gates of Hell and back on the tour bus called The Heathen down the highway called Pagan Freeway. They worshipped pretty well anything, whether it moved or not, whether it was alive or dead, inanimate, made of water, air, planets, trees, animals, mystical non-beings: and the list is very extensive and long.

To contrast between Israel under law and the rest of the world we are looking at extremes at opposite ends of what is good and what is evil. In the pre-Christian era there are references to slavery, cannibalism and human sacrifice to the extreme. I found evidence that cannibalism was rife at the hand of the pagan priests in Canaan. The value of human life pretty well across the board was very low and because we are talking about whole nations being in rebellion we are looking at something that might be described as unremitting chaos. These were lawless times where rulers had no limits. Genocide, murders, beatings and abuse were a common place in society and these times represent a disgraceful period in the human history books.

If we come up to the first century BC we see the Roman Empire under an extensive expansionist programme which included the Middle East, but no one could have possibly imagined the devastation that this empire would wreak throughout Christendom. We have covered in a limited way a brief history of the rise of the Roman Empire and its impact through the laws instituted by Constantine and noted that this was not in any form similar or symbolic of the Messianic Judaism that was brought (and bought) about through Y'shua, the only begotten son of God, and his sacrificial crucifixion.

You will recall we discussed how the Third Century AD Emperor Constantine was very much a devotee to the Roman sun god Sol who professed a conversion from this paganism, but his actions were demonstrably entirely the opposite and we saw him change the holy seventh day to another that was named after the Roman sun god Sol. We again saw Constantine at the Council of Nicea completely demolish Passover to worship another favourite god(dess) from the ancient Chaldean culture and decreed to take up the goddess's name of Easter from Astarte/Ishtar complete with all of its evil practises of fertility rites, which

incidentally, the current world foists onto our hapless children. And the same fate came about for the symbolic celebration of the Lord's birth which was in like manner strapped to December 25th which we can't help but observe that day to be the Roman festival of Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, or in other words the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. Here is Constantine's god Sol again.

The devastating knowledge from all of this to every Christian congregation in the world today is that over the ensuing years from the rule of Constantine in the 1st millennium of this era, all of the other "holy" days on the current Christian calendar are linked to these three pagan god days.

Now if you are wondering how this works: we would turn up for church services on Sunday thinking this was within God's will. We did not realise that in many cathedrals and churches that the sun burst about the head of a crucified Jesus (Y'shua) was in fact to signify that the sun god Sol, the unconquered sun god lives on in victory. Are you starting to get the gist of all this? And then we would sing songs to "a" god, thinking this was "the" God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, *but we were wrong again*. These are songs being sung before the pagan god. And it doesn't matter if I were in any mainstream church; they are all complicit because of the work of syncretism and their acceptance of it.

Take Easter. This has been completely changed from the meaning of the sacrificial lamb at Passover to be a deviate celebration of sexual overtones, fertility rites and playing to the goddess Ishtar. We think we are celebrating the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus (Y'shua) and his ascendancy to God in Heaven, but it's not him, we are celebrating a pagan god in the form of Tammuz. And we sing songs and give great rhetorical deliverances at the podium (and altar) but it is not to God. But we sing triumphantly – to a pagan god. Are you getting the notion that we are in trouble.

Let me say this again. Every celebration in the current main stream liturgical calendar has been syncretised to worship a pagan god. Nothing has changed over the last two thousand years. All of the old gods are still exercised by virtue of the syncretisation. So don't think all is well in the world at all. Children are still sacrificed, souls are destroyed and the world hasn't twigged to what has been going on for millenniums.

To emphasise the direness of this whole issue, think back to our opening comments. The light of God cannot mingle with the darkness of evil. In God's eyes evil will always be evil and we should know the difference.

I am aware of an increasing number of believers who are have realised the evils of Christmas and any celebration of it, and this also will apply to Easter. I can

only encourage those souls who are spiritually aware to hold fast against the criticism from friends and family and, yes, church leaders who will seek to “bring you back” into the fold. I have great empathy for the young parents bringing up children in this environment who don’t need this added pressure in their walk with God. But hold fast your souls and seek out those who are of the same mind. God does not miss a thing. He is very aware of every believer’s walk in the Kingdom of His Salvation.

Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

Jude 1:24-25

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

Amen.

Geoff Rooke
Faithchasers.net