

CHRISTMAS—THE RELENTLESS CONTROVERSY

by: Bill Watson / 12-26-24

Direct comments to: bwatsoncgim@gmail.com

This year an annual “*Winter Solstice*” exhibit from the “*Freedom from Religion Foundation*” (FFRF) was set up in Wisconsin’s Capitol. It opposed religious displays and said: “At this season of the Winter Solstice, may reason prevail. There are no gods, no devils, no angels, no heaven, or hell. There is only our natural world. Religion is but a myth and superstition that hardens hearts and enslaves minds.” The Catholic league responded with a billboard near the FFRF’s headquarters that said: “ATHEISTS STRIKE OUT AT CHRISTMAS. Celebrating Winter Solstice is a Child’s Game. This Is Our Season—Not Theirs. Celebrate the Birth of Christ, Merry Christmas.” And so this illustrates, the controversy continues.

Additionally, there is an effort to characterize certain truths about the birth of Christ, within the Christmas Story that are targeted to compromise Christ’s bloodline of “*Jewishness*” for the sake of *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)*. An example of this is the Nativity scene at the Vatican this year. The infant Jesus is wrapped up in a “Keffiyeh scarf,” which is the dominantly vigorous symbol of the Palestinian cause. Many of you have seen this black & white scarf wrapped around the heads and faces of many protestors across the USA on many of the college campus’ protesting the Palestinian Position. This attempt of rewriting Jesus as a Palestinian is designed to eliminate Christ’s heritage as an Israelite. However, some days later the Scarf was indeed removed without any explanation, to the surprise of the Arab Palestinian officials and community.

In Australia, elementary school children were prevented from exchanging Christmas themed items among each other. On CNN, a panel was told by a Catholic priest that Christmas is about a *Palestinian Jew*; which makes no sense at all. Especially, since you can trace Christ’s bloodline connection back to the House of David, king of Israel, from the tribe of Judah! And in Florida, the Hyatt Regency Miami hosted a Drag Queen Christmas Show and got in trouble with law enforcement, being accused of exposing minors to explicit sexual content. NBC reported the hotel was fined \$5000.00. And so, “the Beat goes on,” as Sonny and Cher use to sing some years ago. It seems the issues never stop when it comes to the subject of Christmas.

There’s even an effort centered around an attempt to explain Christmas’s origins are indeed, a Christian based holiday. Recently, PEW Research claimed because Christmas is accepted by about 96% of the population and the story at its core, is about a personal God taking humanity upon Himself, steps into our world and redeems sinful human beings who are unable to redeem themselves; so how can anyone deny this, as a Christian holiday—the Christian message is inescapable! Or at least that’s what these Christian folks want you to embrace.

But, is Christmas a legitimate Christian holiday (Holy Day)? Did Christ instruct His followers to remember His birthday and to share gifts among themselves so that He might be glorified in all this commercialism? And is there any record of the early New Testament Church observing the Winter Solstice date in celebration of Jesus’ birth? Is it recorded in the book of Acts, or any of the gospels, or for that matter, anywhere in the Bible?

Clearly, anyone that is familiar with their Bibles know the answers to all of the above questions is an **absolute NO!** There is no record of any of those things happening, or preserved and/or commanded to be observed for coming generations. Frankly, attempting to determine Christ’s

actual physical birth is quite a study in its self, when taking into account all of the evidence that points to the time of His birth.

In the United States it's a known fact, many of the early Christian settlers did not observe, or celebrate a Christmas holiday. Actually, the first English Civil War (1642-46) that afforded the Puritans coming to power over the Anglicans, banned the celebration of Christmas, Easter and other various saints days. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded in 1630 adopted the law of 1659 that said; "whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas or the like, either by forbearing of labor, feasting, or any other way, would be slapped with a five-shilling fine." It really wasn't a mainstream celebration in the USA until about the mid-18th century and became such, due to much of English Anglican and Catholic influence.

Clearly, *the fact there is no biblical legitimacy to Christmas observance and it's connection to Christ's birth*; but instead, early on, it seems to be a kind of "organic-outgrowth observance" from the people. However, this feast was formally introduced in Antioch by John Chrysostom in the late 4th century (maybe 388 A.D.) and again, in Alexandria in the following 5th century. Georgian Ladgari says Christmas was celebrated in Jerusalem by the 6th century. (wikipedia)

But, in most cases it is dominantly attached and adopted from the Saturnalia, named in honor of Saturn, *Sol Invictus* (Unconquered sun) celebration, which was connected to Rome *at the time of the emergence of the Church of God*. But, this date of December 25 was significant for a variety of early cultures long before Rome. For instance, Babylon believed the son of the queen of heaven was born on December 25th. Ancient Egypt celebrated the birth of the son of the fertility goddess Isis, while ancient Arabia observed the birth of the moon on this date.

But, Saint Augustine of Hippo in his sermon #192 wrote, "Hence it is that He was born on the day which is the shortest in our earthly reckoning and from which subsequent days begin to increase in length. He therefore, who bent low and lifted us up chose the shortest day, yet the one whence light begins to increase." We can begin to see how the "birth of the Sun (Son)" became conflated, adopted, and ultimately "*shifted to Christ*" Himself, *replacing Sol Invictus*!

It's not my purpose to explain how to understand Christ was born in the fall, but let me close with these few quotes.

"That Christmas was a pagan festival long before the time of our Lord is BEYOND DOUBT. ... The policy of Constantine, and his "Edict of Milan," by establishing universal freedom of religion furthered this. When many of the followers of the old pagan systems—the vast majority of the empire, it must be remembered—adopted the Christian religion as a cult, which Constantine had made fashionable and the "Church" became the *Church of the Roman Empire*, they brought in with them, among a number of other things emanating from Egypt and Babylon, the various Festival Days of the "old religions." Thus Christmas Day, the birthday of the Egyptian Horus (Osiris) became gradually substituted..." [

Bullinger's Companion Bible, Appendix 179, pg 199]

"The main arguments against the Nativity having taken place in December may be set forth very simply:

- 1) The extreme improbability ...that Mary, under such circumstances could have undertaken a journey of about 70 miles through a hill district averaging some 3000 feet above sea-level, in the depth of winter.
- 2) Shepherds and their folks would not be found abiding in the open fields at night in December, for the paramount reason that there would be no pasturage at that time.
- 3) The Roman authorities in imposing such a "census taking" ...would not have enforced the imperial decree at the most inconvenient and inclement season of the year by compelling the people to enroll themselves at the respective cities in December.

- 4) The connection with the priestly course of the Jewish priest Abiah
[Bullinger's Companion Bible, Appendix 179, pg 200]