

# The Plain Truth About Christmas

Rick Railston

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For many, this very day—Christmas—is a lot of people’s favorite time of the year. After all, Christmas is a time to bring people together, isn’t it? Regardless of whether you are religious or not, if you’re a Catholic or a Protestant or an Orthodox or an Atheist or Agnostic, or a nature worshiper or a sun worshiper, Christmas has a little bit for everybody and brings people together. In this “idyllic” environment of a cozy home, fire in the hearth, warm glow from the Christmas tree and a quiet snowfall outside—it just brings everybody together. For those who are religious, it’s a time to worship or revere the mother of God and revere the Child, the Son of God. For those who are not religious, Christmas notes the passing of the winter solstice. The days are starting to get longer, looking at spring and summer ahead, families come together, eat lots of food, drink lots of alcohol and watch a lot of football on this day. And they give and receive gifts. Over the past century, the world has come together to do all of this on this day, regardless of whether you are religious or not.

So, what’s not to like about Christmas? There is something in Christmas for everybody. Only there is one huge problem with this. That problem is that the world comes together to do anything but worship the Almighty God, the Most High God and the Living God. They do everything but worship the One we should be worshipping. Rather, what has happened, certainly over the last half a century, the focus has become more and more on the pleasures for the self, at this time of year. To make people feel good and to give them human joy and human happiness. So, the question is, how did this— worldwide now—observance of Christmas, come to be so pervasive. How has it traversed the whole world when you think about it? How did that happen?

You have to go back to the beginning, and this is by way of introduction. The fact is there is a spirit being—an evil spirit being—and that spirit being knew in advance, God’s plan of salvation. We are told—we won’t turn there—but in Job 38, the angels rejoiced when the physical world was created; when the universe was created, when mankind was created. We also know that Satan is the originator of all lies. We’re told he sinned from the beginning; 1 John 3 tells us that. Remember what Christ said to the Jews when He walked this earth? He said Satan was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth. Remember Christ said:

*“There is no truth in him at all and he is the father of all lies.”*

We find that in John 8. Then the book of Revelation 12, tells us that Satan has deceived the entire world. If we can’t see that today, we are blind indeed. The whole world is deceived and this day, probably more than any other day, proves that.

How has Satan deceived and confused the entire world about the single most important event in human history? That is the coming, the birth of His Son—His life, His death and

His resurrection. How has Satan deceived and confused the entire world about that event and Christ's life? What he did was counterfeited Christ's birth and death and life and resurrection in advance of it happening. He counterfeited it before Christ ever walked the earth. The second thing he did was create a system that would perpetuate that counterfeit over time—keep that counterfeit alive and make it grow. The system would deceive the entire world by mixing truth and error together. Gordon talked about that in his sermonette. By mixing truth and error, then Satan could convince the world to worship false gods, making it attractive to all people. All the while, attempting to destroy our Father's truth and true religion on this earth. This system was prophesied. This is all by way of introduction. In Revelation 17:1 John is writing here.

**Revelation 17:1** *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: (KJV)*

The Greek word for *whore* is Strong's #4204 and it's the Greek word *porne* and the definition from Strong's is "one who yields herself to defilement for the sake of gain". Thayer's Greek Lexicon translates this word as "metaphorically an adulteress, so of Babylon that is Rome the chief seat of idolatry" and then quotes Revelation 17 that we just read. So it has to do with idolatry, getting people to turn away from the true God. Verse 5.

*5) And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS [the same Strong's #4204 that we just covered] AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (KJV)*

We see here in this one verse, that this is the source of idolatry and everything our Father hates. The abominations that He absolutely hates.

Back to verse 4.

*4) And the woman was arrayed [on the outside] in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls [very attractive on the outside], having a golden cup in her hand [but what's in that cup?] full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: (KJV)*

Let's go back to verse 2, because we're looking now back into the past since ancient Babylon.

*2) With whom the kings of the earth [since Babylon] have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. (KJV)*

Over the millennia, the nations have been deceived into following this system that we see very active on this very day. Ancient Babylon codified this false, mysterious, religious system. With that in mind, let's go back to Jeremiah 51 and let's just read one

verse—verse 7. This informs us about this system. Jeremiah was written approximately 600 B.C. From that perspective, notice what the prophet Jeremiah says. I'm going to read this out of the NIV.

**Jeremiah 51:7** *Babylon was a gold cup [notice this] in the LORD's hand [in God Almighty's Hand]; she made the whole earth drunk. The nations drank her wine; therefore they have now gone mad. (NIV)*

The Hebrew word for *mad* is very interesting. It's Strong's #1984 and it's the Hebrew word *halal*, but notice what it means. It means to "make a show or to celebrate". Isn't that what Christmas is all about? To make a "show and to celebrate" The entire world is celebrating right now, as we are having this service, the world is celebrating. The whole world is drunk and has now gone on to make a show and to celebrate. It's interesting too, that the phrase "Babylon...in Yehovah's Hand" tells us that what Babylon has been allowed to do is part of the Almighty's plan. It's not beyond His control, He's allowing it for His own purposes. What we see today, He is allowing for His own purposes. The fact is, modern day Christmas as we see it today is really at the core of Satan's deception. It's at the heart of this mysterious Babylonian religion that Paul said—we won't go there—in 2 Thessalonians, in his second letter to Thessalonica, he said that it was already at work in his day and has been at work since ancient Babylon.

As we go through this historical account, let's notice how cunning and skillful and how successful our adversary is at sowing the seeds of deception. Because the whole world has been deceived. It has born much fruit over the millennia. The fact is, and I have to admit in the beginning, before we get into this subject that it is a complicated subject, because it has so many facets and has been in existence for a thousand years. It's hard to organize into a cohesive whole but we are going to try. This leads to the title:

### The Plain Truth About Christmas

We're going to talk about several facets of this day that we see being celebrated all around us. There will be five points and I just want you to note for time's sake I'm not going to give citations for readily available historical facts; it was just taking too much time. Where necessary I'll give you the citation as to the author or the book. For a while you are not going to need your Bible because we are going to talk about history and then come back to the Bible, as we hopefully tie it all together.

The first point we want to delve into is:

#### **1. How Christmas has been celebrated down through the ages.**

It's important to understand. We discussed that original great deception in a sermon on January 9 of this year titled "The Origins of Mystery Babylon the Great". but just for a brief review, the origins of this involve two key figures in history. The first was Nimrod who was the great grandson of Noah. In Egypt he is known as Osiris. Then his mother, who also happened to be his wife, her name is Semiramis and she is better known as

Ishtar or Isis in history and mythology. We know Nimrod was the founder of the first world empire at Babel, which later became known as Babylon. After Nimrod's death, approximately 2100 to 2200 B.C.—somewhere in that time frame—Semiramis, his mother and his wife, promoted the notion and the belief that he was a god, who had been resurrected from death. We'll see this story is starting to sound familiar. She claimed that she saw a full-grown evergreen tree spring out of the roots of a dead evergreen tree—out of the stump—and that sent a message to her symbolizing that Nimrod was reborn after his death. It was a new life for Nimrod, a resurrection for Nimrod. She said that on the anniversary of his death and this new birth, Nimrod would visit this evergreen tree every year and would leave gifts underneath it. She promoted this during her lifetime. Just guess when the date of Nimrod's rebirth might be? It was the winter solstice. In today's Gregorian calendar, it's December 20 or 21 depending on how the sun moves in that particular year, it's one of those two days.

A few years later Semiramis bore a son who she named Horus, in history he is also known as Gilgamesh, you may have heard that. She declared that she was visited by the spirit of Nimrod and the spirit of Nimrod made her pregnant with the boy Horus, who was actually Nimrod reincarnated. So again, we see here, a false narrative occurring before Christ ever walked the earth. Over time, Semiramis and her son Horus were worshipped on the winter solstice as Madonna and child, as the Son of God and the sun was a symbol of Nimrod and then Nimrod's being resurrected in the form of his son. As the generations passed and the millennia passed, they were worshipped under different names in different countries and languages. Ashtoreth and Astarte, Malak and Baal in Canaan, Aphrodite and Adonis in Greece, Fortuna and Jupiter in Rome—legends and myths passed down that this mother and child were worshipped down through the centuries and the millennia. Now you had a father and a mother and a son who were all being worshipped and this was another form of trinity—Father, Mother, Son.

During the time between Babel and Nimrod, that interval between that time and when Christ walked the earth, the heathen began to worship the sun. They did so as their god because it represented Nimrod or whatever form of Nimrod was extant as the centuries evolved. The pagans developed a belief that as the days grew shorter, their sun god was somehow leaving them or growing weaker. When the length of daylight began to increase, after the winter solstice, their sun god was now coming back, he was getting stronger, he was not weak now but growing in strength. So as the shortest days came to an end, the rebirth of their sun god was at hand—Nimrod—and it was celebrated and feasted at the winter solstice because they knew from that point forward their god was coming back and getting stronger.

Let me quote from a book, Man and His Gods by Homer Smith, on page 201 he says:

*The winter solstice was the time at which all the sun gods from Osiris to Jupiter, their birthdays were celebrated. The celebration being adorned with the pine tree of Adonis and the holly of Saturn, down through the ages.*

Then the book, Babylonian Mystery Religion by Ralph Woodrow, on page 103 says:

*Now the fact that the various sun gods that were worshipped in different countries were all believed to have been born at the same time. Which seemed to indicate that they were but different forms under different names of the original son of the sun god, Tammuz of Babylon, the land from which sun worship originally spread.*

Ancient Babylon. It's interesting if you look at Egyptian history, their solar deity is named Horus. He was born of a virgin on December 25. The Indian god, Buddha that we have all heard of, worshippers claim that Buddha was born on December 25 in 563 B.C. In Arabia, the birth of the lord of the moon occurred on December 25. In Iran the sun god Mithra was born of a virgin on December 25. Mithraism later crept into the Roman Empire in 100-200 A.D. and it evolved—this alleged god Mithra—evolved into the patron god of loyalty to the emperor. For the first couple of hundred years of Christianity, it was the prime rival to Christianity in the Roman Empire—Mithraism.

Rome had their solstice celebrations—very famously so. The first was called the Saturnalia and it was a seven-day feast beginning on December 17. It's a clever counterfeit of the Feast of Tabernacles because Saturn was the harvest god, which actually is another name for Nimrod. During the Saturnalia, the seven-day feast, they sacrificed pigs to Saturn the harvest god and they also exchanged presents back and forth, in Rome, long before Christ ever walked the earth.

Then the second feast was at the culmination of the Saturnalia. Saturnalia ended on December 24 of our modern calendar and on December 25 they had the Brumalia and that marked the birth of their sun god. In more ancient Rome it was Saul, the sun god. Later it became Mithra and they both coexisted during the Roman Empire and varying factions looking either Saul or Mithra. Either one was called “the god of the unconquerable sun”, because the sun would always come back year to year. For Romans, the Brumalia was their most sacred day of the year. James Frasier wrote a book called The Golden Bough and he labeled the Brumalia as “the nativity of the sun”. Meaning sun, not son. The rebirth of the sun. To mark the occasion Roman homes and temples were decorated with evergreen boughs and we'll see why in just a minute.

Now let's go from that, as we're marching through history, going from the Romans to the Anglo-Saxons. They were Germanic tribes that migrated into England after the Roman Empire began to decline. The Anglo-Saxons celebrated Yuletide beginning on the winter solstice. Under the Julian calendar at that time, it was on December 25. Yuletide was celebrated for twelve days and how they celebrated was that a large log, they called it a Yule log, was burned on a hearth. The Celts believed the sun stood still during the winter solstice and by keeping the Yule log burning for twelve days it encouraged the sun to move, to come back and make the days longer. So, they had that celebration, urging the sun to renew itself and come back, worshipping the sun god. Trees were decorated with pine cones, foliage, candles, gifts were exchanged, all during that time. These were the Anglo-Saxons, absolute pagans.

In his book, The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop wrote, (I'm quoting from the 1916 edition) on page 93:

*The very name which Christmas was popularly known among ourselves, Yule Day, proves at once its pagan and Babylonian origin. The word "yule" is the Chaldean name for little child. As the 25th of December [Hislop says] was called by our pagan Anglo-Saxon ancestors as Yule Day or Child's Day, the night preceding it was called Mother's Night, long before they came into contact with Christianity, which sufficiently proves its character.*

In Scandinavia where half of Dorothy's side came from, the Norse people celebrated Yule from the winter solstice all the way through January. In recognition of the return of the sun, fathers and sons would go out into the forest and bring home a large log which they would set on fire. People would feast until that log burned out which could take as long as twelve days, for a big log. The Norsemen believed that each spark from the fire represented a new pig or a new calf that would be born the following year. It's interesting how these beliefs evolved.

Germany worshipped the pagan god Odin. He was honored during the time of the winter solstice. The Germans were terrified of Odin. The reason they were terrified was they believed he made nighttime nocturnal flights over the land to observe his people. In over flying them and looking down on them, he would decide who would prosper or who would perish in the coming year. Because of his presence, it came to pass for a time that during this time of the winter solstice, many Germans wouldn't venture outside. They would stay inside because they didn't want to be observed by the god Odin and then be condemned to die or persecuted or whatever their beliefs would be.

Now we come to the Middle Ages and by this time, the Middle Ages had largely converted to "Christianity". Christianity replaced pagan religion by the time of the Middle Ages. By holding a mass for Christ—the word Christmas means just that—at the same time as the traditional winter solstice, pagan festivals, the Catholic church increased the chances that Christmas—Christ's Mass—would be more popularly accepted by these pagans. The problem was, by having a Christ's Mass on December 25, in doing so they gave up the ability as to how that date would be celebrated. They went along with the popular practice of the pagans, but put the label, Christ Mass on it. In those days, the Middle Ages, the average individual would go—because the Catholic church was the only religion—to mass on December 25 and go through the rituals, then they would go out and celebrate in their normal, drunken, carnival like atmosphere where they worshipped the sun god. That atmosphere at that time was very similar to what we find today at Mardi Gras—just a drunken orgy. People were celebrating day after day after day, starting on December 25 and yet it was tolerated by the Catholic church because they were having an effort to "convert" the whole population.

In England, the celebration of Christmas became an essential practice of first the Catholic Church and then later, the Church of England—the Anglican Church. As you

know, Henry the VIII had the great division with the Pope during his reign. So, Christmas was quite common in England but in 1645, Oliver Cromwell and his Puritans came to power in England and they vowed to rid England of this decadence that occurred around December 25th—the drinking and the debauchery—so Oliver Cromwell cancelled Christmas in 1645 and that lasted until 1660, fifteen years, until Charles II came to the throne and by popular demand, he reinstated Christmas after the Puritan forces were not in power.

Now let's look at the United States; our history of celebrating Christmas. In the new world, Christmas was, in the beginning, totally inconsequential—it just wasn't a factor—in the new world. According to the Tiverton Historical Society, Christmas was not a holiday in early America in a majority of the colonies. In fact, from 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston. You could not do it. In fact, the documents of the time said that anyone exhibiting a "Christmas spirit" was fined five shillings. Five shillings today is about \$250. This occurred until 1681 in Boston. However, further south in Jamestown settlement, Captain John Smith reported that Christmas was enjoyed by all in Jamestown, in contrast to Boston. After the Revolutionary War, Congress did not take a day off to celebrate Christmas. In fact, they decided to hold its first session on Christmas day in 1789; it was just not an issue, not something to set aside. The Quakers in America treated Christmas like any other day. But the fact is, despite the Puritans efforts and Quaker's efforts, the Anglicans, the Catholics and also the Lutherans introduced Christmas celebrations into the colonies. The colonists imported many English customs surrounding Christmas; drinking, feasting, singing carols house to house (which is called wassailing), I think we've all heard that word. It's interesting, that at that time, the Presbyterians didn't have formal Christmas services. Whereas the Anglicans, Catholics and Lutherans did, Presbyterians did not. That is until their members began attending Christmas celebrations at the other churches and then all of a sudden, the Presbyterians decided to have Christmas services of their own. So now the Presbyterians came over to December 25. Christmas actually wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.

Closing out this first point, overall, what we see is a continuance of a pagan observance, a pagan festival, a deception created 4000 years ago by the great deceiver to pervert and diminish our Father's true religion. Because of this perversion of the true story of the Father and His Son, what has happened is historians and critics of Christianity and Atheists claim that the birth of Jesus is just one of many historical myths. You take college courses today and the birth, life and death of Jesus is presented as a historical myth in all the colleges. They use the excuse for that because of all the legends prior to the birth of Christ—they are so similar. Satan is very, very deceptive. All of this ignores the spirit world—the existence of Satan. Satan has blinded the world to his ability to deceive. Satan's greatest deception is to convince the world that he doesn't exist and if you believe that then you open yourself up to his deception. The fact is, Satan counterfeited, in advance, the truth of God Almighty.

Let's look at a second aspect of history.

## 2. How did Santa Claus—the tradition of Santa Claus—come to be?

You can't walk through your neighborhood, you can't walk through a store, through a mall, you can't drive down a street this time of year without seeing Santa Claus or some form of Santa Claus. There is something behind this jolly, red-suited, shopping mall Santa that we come in contact with today. What lies behind it is a real person. Saint Nicholas of Myra—that is in modern day Turkey. Saint Nicholas was a "Christian monk" who was born approximately—it's not sure—260 A.D. Very little is known about Saint Nicholas' life; even the year of his death is uncertain. The fact is, the Catholics and Eastern Orthodox have celebrated December 6 as his birthday for over 1000 years.

Within a century of his death, the much-admired St. Nicholas has become the center of a number of folk legends. He was credited with stopping a violent storm to save doomed sailors. He donated money to a father forced to sell his daughters into prostitution and he is giving credit for restoring life to three boys who had been dismembered by an unscrupulous butcher. So, all of those are miracles are attributed to Saint Nicholas and they resulted in his sainthood. By the Middle Ages, Nicholas' fame had spread to central Europe. Remember his ministry so to speak, occurred in Turkey. By the Middle Ages his fame had spread to central Europe, in part because some merchants had stolen what was claimed to be parts of his skeleton and shipped them to Italy and sold them to churches who put those parts of his skeleton on display in their churches as relics and he began to be worshipped as a Saint of the Catholic church. His popularity, after Italy, spread to Northern Europe where stories of this monk were mingled with German folktales of elves and sky chariots. All of that began to be mushed up over the decades and over the centuries.

For example, in the Netherlands Saint Nicholas took on the name, Sinterklaas. He was depicted as a tall, white-bearded man in red clerical robes who arrived every December 6, on a boat to leave either gifts or lumps of coal to children who either had been good or bad. That originated in the Netherlands. Stories of Sinterklaas were likely brought to the new world by Dutch settlers in the Hudson River valley in New York. I think we've all heard of Washington Irving, the author who wrote The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. He wrote a satire called The History of New York in 1809 and portrayed Saint Nicholas as a portly Dutchman who flew the skies in a wagon, dropping gifts down chimneys. That occurred in 1809. Then shortly thereafter, a New York merchant and leader of a local New York historical society, a man named John Pintard objected to the debauchery around Christmas celebrations in the early 1800's—the Mardi Gra like atmosphere. He proposed a solution which drew on New York City's Dutch origins and he promoted Saint Nicholas as the patron saint of New York City. He had a pamphlet printed in 1810 which depicts the earliest known American image of what we call today Santa Clause—Sinterklaas. In 1823 another New Yorker, Clement Moore, pinned a poem called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" and today we know that as "T'was the Night Before Christmas". He traded the wagon for a sleigh with eight tiny reindeer. The transition occurred now from Sinterklaas riding a wagon and dropping gifts down chimney's to riding in a sleigh pulled by eight tiny reindeer. Today—it's amazing to me—but today Saint Nicholas is considered by the Catholic church as a patron saint of sailors and children and the thing



that surprises me, he is the patron saint of pawn brokers. You shake your head and ask how did that happened. The Catholic church admits that he is the inspiration for Santa Clause and so therefore in some ways it's in their vested interest to promote the notion of Santa Clause because it venerates one of their patron saints. So, Santa Clause has become a worldwide tradition. But it has nothing to do with the Father and the Son and God's plan of salvation.

The third point we want to look at:

### **3. How did the Christmas tree tradition come to be?**

As we've covered earlier, the history of the Christmas tree began with Nimrod and a new, evergreen growing out of the stump of a tree that was cut down. As we've seen, many, many ancient peoples believed that the sun was a god and they worshipped the sun. Winter came every year because the sun god had become either sick or weak or he was going away somewhere. They celebrated the solstice because it meant that at last, the sun god was either going to get well or going to come back or was having more power because the days were getting longer and the earth was getting warmer because of the sun. Plants and trees that remained green all year long had special meaning to these people that worshipped the sun god. The evergreen boughs remained green through the winter and reminded them that at some point the green would grow again. The earth would come to life again, the sun would come back again. It reminded them of that; that spring and summer would return when their sun god was coming back or getting stronger.

In Northern Europe, the mysterious Druids, which were priests of the ancient Celts, decorated their temples with evergreen boughs as a symbol of everlasting life. The Vikings—those fierce Vikings—believed that evergreens were a special plant of the sun god, Balder. So, they decorated their homes and decorated their temples with evergreens during this time of year. In many countries, it was believed that evergreens would keep away witches, evil spirits, ghosts or frankly, keep away illness. That was the tradition in many pagan cultures.

Germany is generally credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we know it today, where you have a tree in the house with decorations. Germany is credited with bringing the Christmas tree into the churches of the day, be they Catholic or be they Protestant. It is widely held that Martin Luther—the 16th century Protestant reformer—was walking home one winter evening in Germany and composing a sermon. He was awed by the brilliance of the stars twinkling amid the evergreen trees as he was walking through the forest. To recapture that time and that scene for his family, what he did was cut down a tree, erected it in the main room of his home and wired the branches with lighted candles, to simulate, for his family, the stars twinkling through the boughs of the evergreen. This migrated into the celebration of Christmas for—he was a Catholic until he began the Lutheran church—so it migrated from Catholicism into Lutheranism and it was brought to the Americas by German immigrants who either settled in Easter

Pennsylvania, or by the Hessian soldiers who fought with the British during the Revolutionary War.

The Christmas tree didn't come to England until the 1800's. They had a big docudrama about Queen Victoria awhile back on PBS and they made a big deal of the fact that Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840 and Albert was the son of a Duke of two German States. Albert brought the Christmas tree into the royal palace. Christmas was a big thing to Albert and he brought it into the royal palace in England and once the commoners saw and heard that the Christmas tree was in the royal palace of the Queen, they began to do that in their local homes. That began the Christmas tree tradition in England. As an aside, the tradition of Christmas cards began in England about that same time.

It's obvious as we look at the history of the Christmas tree, it has nothing to do with the Father and the Son and the proper worship of the Father and the Son.

The fourth point:

#### **4. Look at how Christmas became "Christianized".**

How a pagan festival could become an integral part of modern day Christianity. How on earth did that happen, when you think about it? We are to worship God Almighty and His Son and instead, we have what we have today. How on earth did that happen? Let's read from the Catholics themselves. The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1911 edition, they are quoting an early Catholic church father, Origen. Origen was born in 184 A.D. and died in 253 A.D.; in fact, he was one of the prime promoters of the trinity. Notice what he says in the late 100's to early 200's A.D.

*In the scriptures, no one is recorded to have kept a feast or held a great banquet on His [referring to Christ's] birthday. It is only sinners like Pharaoh and Herod who make great rejoicings over the day in which they were born into this world.*

Early Catholic church father. The Catholic Encyclopedia goes on to say:

*Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church. The first evidence of the feast is from Egypt. Pagan customs centering around the January calendar gravitated to Christmas.*

This is from the Catholic Encyclopedia. They are admitting that no such celebration occurred in the first 200-300 years of the church of God. The Encyclopedia Britannica says the same thing, 1946 edition:

*Christmas, that is the mass of Christ was not among the earliest festivals of the church.*

As we previously mentioned, in Rome long before Christ walked the earth, the two December festivals were celebrated. The Saturnalia for seven days and the Brumalia on December 25. The first one honored the god of agriculture, the second one honored the birth of the sun god. Let me read from The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge:

*The pagan Saturnalia and the Brumalia were two deeply entrenched and popular customs to be set aside by Christian influence.*

They were part of the fabric of society.

*The pagan festival with its riot and merry making [like Mardi Gras] was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue the celebration with little change in spirit or manner. Christian preachers of the west and the near east protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated. While Christians of Mesopotamia accused their western brethren of idolatry and sun worship, for adopting as Christian, this pagan festival.*

There was resistance for a time. In his book, The Two Babylons, Alexander Hislop says this—the 1926 edition on page 93:

*Within the Christian church, no such festival as Christmas was ever heard until the third century. How then, did the Romish church fix on December 25 as Christmas day? Why thus? Long before the fourth century and long before the Christian era itself, a festival celebrated among the heathen at that precise time of the year in honor of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven and it fairly may be presumed that in order to conciliate the heathen and to swell the number of the nominal adherence of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman church, giving it only the name of Christ. Upright men strove to stem the tide, but in spite of all of their efforts the apostasy went on until the church, with the exception of a small remnant [and that is true today, we're here today as a small remnant but that remnant has existed from the time that Christianity accepted this pagan festival] was submerged under pagan superstition that Christmas was originally a pagan festival is beyond all doubt. The time of the year and the ceremonies with which it is still celebrated, prove its origin.*

Absolutely—Christmas trees, Santa Claus—what does that have to do with true religion? Let me go back to the New Catholic Encyclopedia—this is from the Catholics own mouths, the 1967 edition:

*On December 25, 274 A.D., Aurelian [he was the Roman Emperor at the time] had proclaimed the sun god, principal patron of the Empire and dedicated a temple to him in the Campus Martius [in Latin that means the "Field of Mars"—a field in Rome]. Christmas originated at a time when the cult of the sun was particularly strong in Rome. According to the hypothesis accepted by most*

*scholars today, the birth of Christ was assigned the date of the winter solstice, December 25 in the Julian calendar, because on this day, as the sun began its return to northern skies, the pagan devotees of Mithra [the sun god] celebrated [in Latin] the Dies natalis solis invicti. [the Birth of the Invincible Sun]*

In English that means, “birthday of the invincible sun”. It’s a fact that Pope Julius I, who was Pope from 337 to 352 A.D., made it official that December 25 was the birthday of Jesus Christ and was to be celebrated as such. Back then it wasn’t called Christmas, it was called the Feast of the Nativity and it spread to Egypt in the early 400’s. It came to England by the 500’s. *The Encyclopedia American*, the 1944 edition says:

*It [referring to Christmas] was according to many authorities, not celebrated in the first centuries of the Christian church as the Christian usage in general was to celebrate the death of a remarkable person rather than their birth. A feast was established in memory of this event in the fourth century. In the fifth century, the Western church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Saul, as no certain knowledge of the day of Christ’s birth existed.*

We see that the historical account of a totally pagan festival came to be part of mainstream Christianity. Today, it is celebrated worldwide, even in communist China which surprised me. I did a little research on Christmas in communist China. It’s not a public holiday in China or related to religion at all but more of a novelty day like Valentine’s Day. They celebrate Valentine’s Day, they also celebrate Christmas, but it’s a novelty, not a religious event. But during this time of year in China, malls and streets of the big cities are filled with Christmas decorations, with Santa Clauses and fir trees—in China today. It’s interesting that the city of Yiwu in Zhejiang province is famed as the Christmas capital of the world—in China. The reason for that is Yiwu is the home of over 600 factories that make the majority of all the lights and decorations that are sold all over the world during Christmas. We see all these around us and the vast majority are made in Yiwu China and they claim they are the Christmas capital of the world. For now, the commercialized version of Christmas is celebrated in China, in that regard.

The fact is, Christmas has become an entirely secular worldwide holiday for the majority of the people—not all, but the majority—because the world is turning away from religion faster and faster. Over the last twenty years, Christmas has become more of a secular holiday and not a religious one. The tradition of gift giving at this time of year came from Nimrod and that evergreen tree. It’s astonishing in the U.S. today, guess how much is being spent on Christmas. They estimate this year, in the time of a pandemic, how much is going to be spent on Christmas? It’s almost 1 trillion dollars. Can you imagine? We are the world’s largest spenders on Christmas. 22% of Americans go into debt to buy Christmas ornaments, gifts, whatever. 14% of Australians, 10% of Europeans, go into debt to keep this day. It’s interesting only 7% of Americans don’t spend anything on Christmas. That includes the likes of us who do not believe in Christmas but it also includes some people who just object to Christmas on general principles of what it’s doing to society. Only 7% don’t spend anything on Christmas.

The point is, as we close out this fourth point, the entire world has been deceived into keeping Christmas. It's a satanically inspired pagan festival and worldwide. What does that show us? It shows us the power of Satan to deceive. That's something that we need to keep in mind as God's people. The success of Christmas leads, in my mind at least—if Satan has been successful about Christmas, in this end time, what is he going to do next? What is the next big deception coming.

That leads us to the final, fifth point.

## **5. How will Satan come after the church in the future?**

How will Satan come after God's people in the future? Let's go to Matthew 24:24. We know this, we've read it so many times, but let's read it relative to what's happened at Christmas, this time of year and then what we see coming down the road after this from the great deceiver.

**Matthew 24:24** *For there shall arise false Christs*

[we're talking about the end time, the apostles are asking Christ what's going to happen at the end time],

*and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders*

[that hasn't happened yet, we don't see great signs in the sky, great wonders going on, great miracles happening];

*insomuch that, if it were possible, they [that is the signs and wonders] shall deceive the very elect. (KJV)*

This is something that all of us need to be prepared for. We're going to see marvelous miracles, that if we're not careful can deceive the very elect. With that in mind let's go to 2 Peter 2:1. Peter has a warning along this same vein that ties into Matthew 24.

**2 Peter 2:1** *But there were false prophets also among the people [can't read the Old Testament without running into false prophets down through the millennia], even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

*2) And many shall follow their pernicious ways; (KJV)*

The definition of *pernicious* means "having a harmful effect"—but notice this—"especially in a gradual or subtle way". Just what Christmas has done over the millennia; a gradual, subtle change to bring in paganism into "Christianity".

*2 continued) ... by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. (KJV)*

Religion in general is evil spoken of by many today and those who adhere to the truth of God, certainly so. Verse 3 out of the NIV.

*3) In their greed these teachers will exploit you with [made up] fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. (NIV)*

Verse 9, back to the King James.

*9) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:  
10) But chiefly them [now notice this] that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed*

[no wonder they despise government because they are self-willed, they want their way],

*they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. (KJV)*

Indeed, there is government in the church of God but it should be loving and kind and gentle, exhibiting all the fruits of the Holy Spirit. It should be that way and it should be respected frankly. We see here that God's way is going to be fraught with damnable heresies to the point that the truth is evil spoken of.

What is Satan's goal in coming after the church? We've covered it so many times, we won't turn there but in John 10:10, the parable of the sheepfold, remember what Christ said:

*Satan comes not but to steal, to kill and to destroy.*

Steal us away from the church, kill us physically if he can, if he's allowed to and destroy us spiritually so we never live again. Christ said, "Why am I come?"

*I'm come that they might have life and they might have it more abundantly.*

There is coming a worldwide deception, closing out this fifth point. With supernatural miracles to help confirm the deception. We have to be aware of that and be careful about that. Miracles are going to confirm the deception so that even the very elect, if it's possible, could be deceived. We could be deceived. The message is, only those who are close to the Father and close to His Son and have a close personal relationship and study God's Word, those will not be deceived. We have to be prepared for that and be careful, because look at what Satan has done with Christmas. If he can do that to the world, and he can do it so pervasively as we see today all around us, what could he do with us, if he was let loose a little bit more? We need to be careful about that.

Let's summarize: Today we have seen prime examples of Satan's deception. The deception of a virgin birth. The deception of the birth of the Son of God. The deception of a Savior being resurrected, all long before the birth of Jesus Christ. This is why some scholars believe that Christianity is nothing more than a copy of some earlier tradition of religion. Dorothy and I were talking and she said that in her junior college she said she did a paper on Mithraism. She wasn't in the church at the time but grew up as a Methodist and was astonished when she studied Mithraism, because it sounded exactly like Jesus Christ. Birth, death, resurrection, going to heaven—that's exactly the story of Mithra that was counterfeited long before Christ ever walked the earth. It astonished her. That's why some scholars today—most scholars—believe that Christianity, the life of Christ is just another myth down through the millennia.

Satan's plan has always been to mix truth with error and that's something we have to be careful about. He has done so in an effort to deceive the world into worshipping pagan gods and calling them Christian and has he ever been successful. It's just amazing. Or, as it is today, worshipping nothing but the self. As people move away from religion, what mankind is doing is worshipping the self, the mind of man. The man is the highest point on the evolutionary chain—there is nothing greater than the mind of man. The spirit world doesn't exist, the Creator doesn't exist—it's up here, my mind is the pinnacle and that is nothing but self-worship.

All the time, Satan is attempting to destroy the Father's true religion. The one story that Christmas teaches us is the ability of our adversary to deceive. We need to learn that lesson. He has deceived the whole world. We read it in Revelation but on this day, you look around and it's here, it's happened, it's all around us. He has deceived the entire world. It's amazing that the entire population of the world has been deceived and we see it right here, right now. That is why God Almighty, Yehovah is so adamant about the following; let's go to Deuteronomy 12:30. Moses in his final warning to Israel says this and why we should take this so seriously.

**Deuteronomy 12:30** *Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them [referring to the heathen], 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.*

*31) Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hates, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.*

*32) What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. (KJV)*

Let's go to another warning in Jeremiah 10:1. Jeremiah is speaking to the house of Israel.

**Jeremiah 10:1** *Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: (KJV)*

Let me read from Clark's Commentary about verse 1:

*These words are more particularly addressed to the Ten Tribes scattered among the heathen by the Assyrians.*

When the Assyrians took the northern Ten Tribes captive. It's like us today because we are scattered among the heathens; those who do not believe in the true God, so it's similar.

*2) Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven [for they are coming]; for the heathen are dismayed at them. (KJV)*

They worship the stars and the planets and the sun.

*3) For the customs of the people are vain: for one cuts a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. (KJV)*

Verse 4 out of the New King James.

*4) They decorate it with silver and gold; They fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple.*

*5) They are upright, like a palm tree, And they cannot speak; They must be carried, Because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, For they cannot do evil, Nor can they do any good."*

*6) Inasmuch as there is none like You, O LORD (You are great, and Your name is great in might) ... (NKJV)*

Verse 10 out of the King James.

*10) But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to abide His indignation.*

*11) Thus you shall say to them: "The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."*

*12) He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, And has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. (KJV)*

I hope the Web telescope allows us to see that even in greater and greater detail. We should be thankful that our Father has revealed to us the truth about Satan's worldwide deception. We should really be thankful for that, that we are not deceived. That revelation about this worldwide deception should make us all the more on guard against future deceptions. Because the truth will make us free, as John 4:23 tells us. The truth shall make you free. So, on this day called Christmas, we should be so thankful that God Almighty has revealed His truth to us through His spirit so that we can avoid being deceived as we get closer and closer to the end.