



CGOM

Churches Of God Outreach Ministries
People working together to proclaim the Gospel

"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"

I-800-611-8080 / www.cgom.org
PO Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155-0621

Mini Study

Christmas...holiday or holy day?

When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations from before you, wherever you go in to dispossess them, and you dispossess them, and dwell in their land; take heed to yourself that you be not ensnared to follow them, after that they are destroyed from before you; and that you inquire not after their gods, saying: 'How used these nations to serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' You shall not do so unto the LORD your God; for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods. All this word which I command you, that shall you observe to do; thou shall not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

(Deuteronomy 12:29-13:1)

The darkness at the end of the year invites us to party to lighten the dreary days. The religion of most people living in the northern hemisphere fills the gap with some form of celebration. For most Christians it is Christmas. For Jews, Hanukkah. And for those without some official recognition of the death of the old year and the birth of the new—well, Christmas sounds good. It has almost become a global celebration. If you are not personally 'into religion' well, never mind, it's a chance of a knees-up. And indeed Christmas has largely become a secular holiday when all work grinds to a halt—sometimes for two or three weeks. The months leading to December 25 are an eternity of credit-fueled frenzied shopping and poisoned by Christmas 'music'. Christmas has become a holiday, not a holy day.

- *Christmas* is promoted by the Christian church as the time of the birth of Jesus—the Messiah, Christ
- The name derives from the Roman Catholic 'Mass of Christ'
- The timing derives from the ancient celebration, known as *Saturnalia*, of the annual re-birth of the sun god: that is, when the sun begins its ascent from our shortest days in late December
- During the festival, homes—and churches—are today festooned with evergreen trees, brightly-colored baubles, candles; songs lauding the birth of Jesus as 'a babe in the manger' are sung; food is consumed in excess; and not infrequently the celebrations dissolve into drunken debauchery. All such practices were derived from the worship of '*gods that are no gods*'
- None of this, of course, is a concern to most Westerners. Christmas is a holiday, party-time. And anyway, who cares about religion?
- But what if you are a Christian, have strong beliefs in Jesus and in the Christian Scriptures? The text quoted above should give pause for thought
- It is a well-established historical fact that Jesus was not born in the dead of winter, but in the early autumn; likely the first day of the Festival of Tabernacles.
- The Scriptures do not provide the date of the birth of Jesus as it does the divinely-appointed holy days (*see* Leviticus 23). Christmas celebration is a late starter—from around the mid-fourth century AD
- There is no New Testament confirmation that the brethren celebrated the birth of Christ; the focus is on his death and resurrection, and on God's Spirit indwelling His people
- Jesus, the apostles and all members of the early church observed the Biblical holy days. Each of these highlights aspects of the life and mission of Jesus
- However sincere a believer may be, the observance of Christmas is an affront to the Saviour. Jesus perfectly reflects the teachings of the Old Testament, and expects his disciples to follow his example
- Many Christians around the world have come to understand the importance and significance of the Biblical days, and faithfully observe them

*Request the free articles:
The Feast of the Nativity and God's Holy Days*

Published by:
The Churches of God Outreach Ministries
PO Box 54621
Tulsa, OK 74155-0621
©2006 The Churches of God Outreach Ministries
www.cgom.org

This article may be freely copied and distributed as long as it is done in its entirety, including this notice, and is given away free, without any charge to the recipient.

Write us for a free catalog of other free articles we have to offer.