

# *The Truth about New Year's Day*

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Where did our modern New Year's Day celebrations come from? Why do so many people observe this day with parties and excessive consumption of alcohol? Why are there so many resolutions made by celebrants that go unfulfilled? Why does our new year begin during winter—in the middle of the night? Who are Father Time and the New Year's Babe? The answers to these questions are going to surprise you.



# *The Truth about New Year's Day*

This month *shall be* your beginning of months;  
it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

~ Exodus 12:2 ~

On the eve of each new year, millions of eyes from all over the world find themselves transfixed before their television screens—gazing at a sparkling sphere in Times Square, New York. Created by the Waterford Crystal Company, this ball is an amazing 6 feet in diameter and weighs a whopping 1200 pounds. It is covered with 672 crystal triangles, precisely cut on both sides to reflect as much light as possible during its wondrous show. Inside the illuminated orb, there are an amazing 9,576 LED lights that are capable of creating 16 million colors.

The grand display is of such intricacy that it is controlled by a computer in order to produce one of the single greatest light shows of the year. From a flickering flame, to the waving red, white, and blue of the American flag, the multiple thousands of lights can be controlled to form any image the programmers might imagine. As millions of people look on, a virtual kaleidoscope of eye dazzling imagery radiates out of the glittering globe.

At 11:59 p.m. the ball begins its descent as untold numbers of voices unite to count down the final seconds of the year. Then, at exactly 12 midnight, the resplendent ball is released and its fall signals shouts of joy, toasts of cheer, well wishes, warm embraces, and even passionate kisses that sweep across the land from east to west.

Literally billions of people celebrate New Year's Day. On the average New Year's Eve, there are more parties than on any other day of the entire year. Millions of celebrants shout out "Happy new year!" in dozens of dialects as they shake hands, clink glasses and take another drink.

Shockingly, in the United States alone, over 18 million gallons of alcoholic beverages are consumed on New Year's Eve. It is estimated that eight percent of those who drink will vomit that night. Far worse, thousands will be arrested for drunk driving during this time, tens of thousands will become overly intoxicated, and approximately 50 individuals will lose their life as a result of a drunk driver.

Around the world, countless numbers dance to the loud, pulsating beat of erotic music. Bar rooms are filled with smoke and drunken debauchery. And, on this one night more than any other, people abandon the inhibitions they have kept pent up for much of the rest of the year. Scores let their morals drop only to wake up in the morning next to someone they barely know. Many of these quick affairs will result in disastrous long term consequences.

In America alone it is estimated that 30 million people kiss, more than 140,000 babies are conceived, and over 800,000 revelers meet their future spouses on this night. Tragically, 600,000 marriages are likely to end up in divorce because of circumstances that will occur on New Year's Eve.

There is quite a raucous on this night. Some light off fire crackers or fireworks. Others ignorantly shoot guns off into the air, and 1.6 million celebrants are involved in fist fights. As many as 6.8 million suffer some kind of injury, and 60,000 individuals will spend the night in jail. Thousands suffer property damage, and what is far worse—people die as a result of New Year's Eve celebrations.

### ***Why Celebrate This Day?***

In the context of what actually occurs on this holiday, it's a wonder we haven't already asked ourselves this question. Why do we celebrate New Year's Day? Where did this observance come from? Why does the new year begin during wintertime? Is this truly the beginning of the year? Is there any religious significance associated with this day, or is it simply an excuse to party?

The shocking truth is that we do not celebrate this day because it is the beginning of the new year. We do not party because it honors God. We do it because we have been deceived into condoning and promoting the observance of New Year's Day. As the Apostle John wrote:

The great dragon... that serpent of old, called  
the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole  
world (Revelation 12:9).

This is a truth that few take to heart. The devil has deceived the entire world. The deception has been so effective that few would ever believe that it has occurred. Even professing Christians have been deceived to some extent. However, if you are discerning, the evidence can be seen everywhere.

In our world today, we often think that evil is good. We believe that the way to peace is found in war. We protect criminals instead of their victims. We treat animals with more respect than we do human embryos. We reject God in our society and think we are doing the public a service. We celebrate holidays that honor sex, death, and paganism and by doing so we openly reject God's authority in our lives. This is evident in the simple fact that we celebrate the new year in the dead of winter, at midnight, when God told us that the year begins in the Spring (Exo. 12:1-2).

## ***The Start of a Day***

The festivities of New Year's Day hit their highest point at exactly 12:00 midnight in the middle of winter. This is indicative of a common belief that each new day begins at midnight. When considering the details of this common practice, one needs to ask a defining question. Why would anyone choose to start a new day in the middle of the night? Just when did this practice begin?

Although we do not know exactly when people began using midnight to begin the day, we do have clues to its origin. First, we must realize that Almighty God is known as the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:9-22). He is the Eternal—determining the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10). Because He is the author of time, only He has the authority to determine when a day, or year, begins and ends.

Furthermore, His way makes perfect sense. It is not confusion (1Cor. 14:33). A day does not start in the middle of the night! The day comes to its logical close when the sun sets. As the light fades on the horizon, this marks the end of one day and the beginning of another. For this reason Moses recorded that:

God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So **the evening and the morning were the first day** (Genesis 1:5).

In this verse we see that God split the day into two parts—day and night. He defines the night portion as beginning with evening, and the day with morning. Thus, the day ends when the sun sets—in the evening, and the next day begins at this same time. This is confirmed in other places in the Bible. For example, speaking of the Day of Atonement, God explained:

*It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, **from evening to***

**evening**, you shall celebrate your sabbath (Leviticus 23:32).

From this and other verses, we realize a day is defined as evening to evening, or sunset to sunset. God has set the time of the day to both end and begin when the sun has gone down. This fact makes our declaration of the day and year an affront to God's authority. It is the arrogance of man that makes Him think that he has the right to determine what time the day ends when God has already declared it.

In the context of this truth, consider that darkness and midnight have long been associated with chaos, the underworld, sorcery, and death. It is what the media commonly portrays as the time of visitation from ghosts and demons. According to Slavic folklore, midnight was the time when vampires rose from graves to suck the blood of mortals, witches assailed the sleeping to steal their breath, and devils came to gather sinners to hell. At one time, many Polish Jews believed that it was midnight when demons possessed people, causing insanity.

Night's attributes were believed to provide a veil for mischief. Acts of sorcery and witchcraft were thought best performed at midnight. This was also a time when sorcerers gathered ingredients for their magical rituals as herbs where thought to be most potent when harvested at midnight. Those who practiced such abominations came to view midnight as the pinnacle of each day.

By choosing for ourselves when to begin the day, humankind once again rejected God's authority in his life. We have disregarded His designated time of sunset to mark the day's transition, and have instead chosen the middle of the night to mark this changeover.

### ***The Beginning of the Year***

God told us when to start and end a day, but what about the year? Does He give us instructions for this? The answer is yes! On the fourth day of creation, before ever making a man, God set the sun and moon in their specific locations “for signs and seasons, days and years” (Gen. 1:14). The word “seasons” is *moed* in the Hebrew and means:

An appointment, that is, a fixed time or season; specifically a festival; conventionally a year; by implication, an assembly (*Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, H4150).

Later we see that Abraham also kept God’s laws and statutes. Those statutes included the holy days (Gen. 26:5). As God had instructed him, Abraham taught these to his children (Deu. 6:6-7). However, those children became enslaved in Egypt and wore the yoke of bondage for centuries. Under strict Egyptian rule, the Israelites lost many of the teachings of the patriarchs.

In the process of time, God heard the cries of His people and remembered His covenant with Abraham (Exo. 2:24). He brought Israel out of slavery through great miracles. Upon doing so, He had to reeducate His people regarding His way. This instruction included the commandments and the holy Days. God began by showing Israel when to keep the Passover in the Canaanite calendar they were already familiar with:

Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, “This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you” (Exodus 12:1-2).

God did not leave the beginning of the year to chance. It was one of the first things He revealed to the

Israelites. He stated that the first month of the year was the month they knew as Abib. This means that the first day of Abib is the first day of the year.

It is also important to realize that God absolutely does not enjoin celebrating the first day of the year. There is no special status given it. Its only significance is in the fact that it marks the beginning of the year. In fact, there is no record of Israel celebrating this day at any time during the faithful years as God's people. This in itself is a testimony to the fact that God never intended us to celebrate the new year at all!

The month of Abib has always fallen within the months of March to mid April. This indicates that, according to God, the new year begins in the spring when life is renewing and the beauty of creation flourishes. Plants and animals are springing forth in the rejuvenation of their existence. The earth blossoms with flowers, leaves, and green grass shapes the hills and plains. In contrast, the new year that most acknowledge takes place in the dead of winter—in the midst of rain and snow storms. This is directly opposed to God's intent and instruction.

### ***Different Strokes—of the Clock—for Different Folks***

The New Year celebrations are not God's creation. They are the creation of men, and mankind cannot even agree on the time of its observance. There is confusion in both the way and the times it is observed. As Theodor H. Gaster wrote:

There is scarcely a people, ancient or modern, savage or civilized, which has not observed or does not observe it in one form or another. Yet no other festival has been celebrated on so many different dates or in so many seemingly different ways (*New Year: Its History, Customs, and Superstitions*, foreword XI).

The Babylonians celebrated the new year on the first day of their seventh month. Hindus celebrate their new year at varying times according to their location. Muslims use a calendar having 354 days in most years, thus their new year falls on different dates. For the Russian Orthodox church, the year starts on January 14<sup>th</sup>. In Iran, the year begins on March 21<sup>st</sup>, and many Chinese celebrate the new year from January 21<sup>st</sup> through February 19th. During the middle ages, most European countries used March 25<sup>th</sup> as the beginning of the year, but by the 1600's many western nations adopted a revised Gregorian calendar which is still used today. Great Britain and its American colonies adopted January 1st as New Year's Day in 1752, and this date has been our standard for nearly 400 years.

In Scotland, New Year's Day was observed by visitors bringing coal and short bread to one another as gifts. In Japan, during the month of December, people observe what they call "forget the year parties." In Spain, they are known to eat 12 grapes expecting 12 blessings from each month of the next year. Buddhist temples strike gongs 108 times to expel what they believe are 108 human weaknesses. The Dutch burn their old Christmas trees and light fireworks to purge out the old year. In America, we drop the ball, hold parties, have parades and make a list of resolutions that few ever keep.

### *Origins of Celebrating New Year's Day*

In light of these varying traditions, one may ask where this observance came from? What is its meaning? Did the practice of celebrating the new year come from the Bible? Are there any examples of faithful people keeping it, and does God have an opinion on the subject?

When uncovering the roots of this holiday's origin, we find that the celebration of New Year's Day is the oldest of all secular holidays. The first historical records show it

being observed in ancient Babylon about 4000 years ago. Earl Count explained in his book *4000 Years of Christmas*:

Mesopotamia is the very ancient mother of civilization. Christmas began there, over four thousand years ago, as the festival which renewed the world for another year. The “twelve days” of Christmas; the bright fires and probably the Yule log; the giving of presents; the carnivals with their floats, their merry makings and clownings, the mummers who sing and play from house to house; the feastings; the church processions with their lights and song—all these and more began there centuries before Christ was born. And they celebrated the arrival of a New Year (pp. 24-25).

Celebrating the new year was a pagan custom associated with ancient sun-worship that was observed well over 2000 years before the birth of Jesus. These new year festivities in Babylon eventually found their way to Greece, and from there they migrated to Rome where the celebration was called the Saturnalia. The holiday was observed as a time of reveling, drinking bouts, and orgies that included human sacrifice. How then did such an atrocious celebration come to be celebrated by a professing Christian church?

### ***Baptizing the New Year***

The integration of New Year's Day festivities into the professing Christian community occurred during the time of Emperor Constantine. In 300 A.D., this pagan ruler declared Christianity as the official religion of the state. However, his new found conviction was a far cry from the faith once delivered to the saints. Upon the emperor's edict, vast numbers of pagans came into the church and they brought their pagan customs with them. Earl Count wrote

of this influx while exposing the origin of celebrations during the month of December stating:

There were many immigrants into the ranks of the Christians by this time. But the Church fathers discovered to their alarm that they were also facing an invasion of pagan customs. The habit of Saturnalia was too strong to be left behind. At first the church forbade it, but in vain. When a river meets a boulder that will not be moved, the river flows around it. If the Saturnalia would not be forbidden, let it be tamed... The Church finally succeeded in taking the merriment, the greenery, the lights, and the gifts from Saturn and giving them to the babe of Bethlehem... The pagan Romans became Christians—but the Saturnalia remained! (*4000 Years of Christmas*, pp. 36-38).

Rather than resist the influence of the vast number of pagans, the Catholic fathers compromised! The apostate church tried to baptize the Saturnalia. They changed the symbolism of its rituals and put Christ's name on it. Despite their efforts, it is important to realize that the celebrations stemming from the Saturnalia remain pagan and are abhorred by God (Deu. 12:30-31; Jer. 10:2).

### ***The New Year's Babe – a Pagan God***

One such custom the pagans brought into the church was the babe of New Year's Day. In its earliest use, the Greeks celebrated the worship of a god known as Dionysus—their god of the grape harvest, winemaking and wine. As a symbolic part of their celebration, they would parade a baby in a basket. This represented the rebirth of their god, and the fertility of crops. As Gaster wrote:

Actually, the New Year Babe is far older than he looks. In ancient Greece, it was customary at the

great festival of Dious to parade a babe cradled in a winnowing basket. This was taken to symbolize the annual (or periodic) rebirth of that god as the spirit of fertility. The ceremony is portrayed on a sarcophagus now in the Fitzwilliam at Cambridge, England. Two men, one bearded, the other in the flower of youth, are shown carrying the infant in the winnowing basket (*New Year: Its History, Customs, and Superstitions*, p. 67).



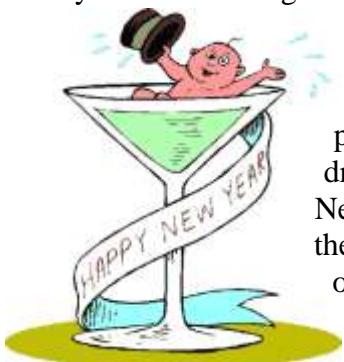
*Sarcophagus relief of baby Dionysus (c. 101-200 AD)*



*Statue of Dionysus holding grapes and drinking wine*

The symbol of a baby for the new year was common in pagan practice, and the Catholic church disallowed it for centuries. Eventually these religious leaders gave in to the pressure, allowing infants to be used during celebrations that took place during this time of year, but with one adjustment. The new year's babe was transformed into the Babe of Bethlehem—a symbol of Christ.

The new year's babe is no less than a symbol of Dionysus—a Greek god of wine! It was in his honor that



the Greeks held the festival of the wine-press in January. It is no wonder that New Year's Eve parties have become an excuse to drink. More than any other holiday, New Year's Eve holds the record for the most alcohol consumed on any one day!

As sophisticated as we might think our society is in our modern age, we are still worshiping the god of alcohol! Our attitude is no different than that of the ancient primitive religions in which they indulge in boisterous festivities on New Year's Eve, let their inhibitions run wild, and then try to “turn over a new leaf” the very next day.

### ***Father Time –A Pagan God***

Another symbol of the New Year's Day is known as Father Time. This iconic figure is usually depicted as an elderly bearded man, sometimes having wings, dressed in a robe, and carrying a scythe, an hourglass, or another timekeeping device symbolizing the passing time of life from one year to the next.

In reality, this quaint character is an extension of another Greek god known as Cronos. It is from his name that we get the word “chronograph,” relating to the measurement of time.

Cronos was considered to be the god who cut men down—bringing death to individuals. In Rome, he was known as Saturn, the king of the Titans who were a race of gods who were said to have created the universe. His mythological tale states that Cronos fled the wrath of Zeus, moved to Rome, changed his name to Saturn, and invented the holiday called the Saturnalia in which the Romans feasted and exchanged gifts. His story is a common theme of Greek mythology filled with pride, betrayal, and murder:

Cronus was the ruling Titan who came to power by castrating his father Uranus. His wife was Rhea, while their offspring were the first of the Olympians. To ensure his safety, Cronus ate each of the children as they were born. This worked until Rhea, unhappy at the loss of her children, tricked Cronus into swallowing a rock, instead of Zeus. When he grew up, Zeus revolted against Cronus and the other Titans, defeating them, and banishing them to Tartarus in the underworld. Cronus managed to escape to Italy, where he ruled as Saturn. The period of his rule was said to be a golden age on earth, honoured by the Saturnalia feast (<https://www.greekmythology.com/Titans/Cronus/cronus.html>, retr. 10/23/2017).



*Relief of Rhea handing Cronos a swaddled baby*

Cronos came to be known as the Grim Reaper. Originally, Cronos was portrayed as killing his own children by eating them. This became a Greek rite of human sacrifice that occasionally occurred during the Saturnalia. Today, our modern images of the Grim Reaper and Father Time still contain elements of their ancient past found in Cronos.



*Cronos*



*Father Time*



*The Grim Reaper*

### **January – a Pagan God**

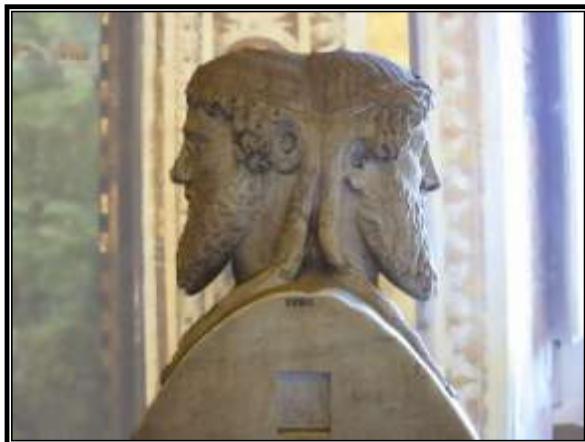
Another pagan god that plays a role in our modern age is the Roman god, Janus. The first month of the year, January, has been derived from this false deity who was known as the god of gates, doors, endings, and new beginnings. It is from Janus that we get the term janitor meaning a keeper of doors.

Janus was an ancient deity who played an important role in Roman myth and pagan religion. He was often depicted with two heads looking in opposite directions and was used to symbolize change and transition. He was often represented as the source of progression from the past to the future, from one condition to another and the process of growing up in life. As Gaster wrote:

The Roman god Janus, who presided over the month January, derived his name from the word *janua*, meaning “door.” Since a door leads both in and out, Janus was always portrayed with two faces; one looking backwards, and the other forwards. Janus is a fitting symbol of New Year ceremonies; for these ceremonies are designed just as much to get rid of the past as to welcome the future. They belong, in fact, just as much to the old as to the new; and it is in the last days of the old year that they usually begin (*New Year: Its History, Customs, and Superstitions*, p. 10).



*Republican coin showing the head of Janus*



*Bust of Janus from the Vatican Museum*

Janus was thought to be the one who presided over everything that is seemingly double edged in life. He represented the transition between that which was primitive and the advancement of civilization. Worshipped as a god of beginnings and endings, Janus was invoked at the start of each day. In the perspective of this history, it is obvious how this false god eventually came to play a role in our designation of the new year.

### **No Other Gods**

In light of the origins of this observance, what must the Almighty God think of our modern celebration of New Year's Day? We can begin to understand the answer to this question when we consider the words of Christ when He was tempted of the devil. At that time, Christ said something of enormous importance that bears directly on this question of celebrating New Year's Day. When asked to turn stones to bread:

He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God’” (Matthew 4:4).

When Christ spoke these words, there had not been any New Testament books produced. He was talking about the Old Covenant writings, and actually quoted Deuteronomy 8:3. In that context, what are some of the words from the mouth of God in the Old Covenant?

Certainly, the Savior would expect us to understand the first and great commandment that we are to have no other god's before the true and Almighty God. Moses recorded these words that came from the very mouth of God, saying:

And God spoke all these words, saying: “I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me”  
(Exodus 20:1-3).

If we only had these two sentences in the entire Bible, we could know for certain what we should do regarding this holiday. There are several false gods involved with the observance of New Year's Day! There is Janus, Dionysus, and Cronos—all three are false and wicked gods. This first commandment alone explains that God is appalled at the observance of the new year! Thus, no true Christian should be involved in any way, shape, or form with this celebration.

### ***The Example of Israel***

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote something of enormous importance. He explained that what happened to the ancient Israelites was not so much about them, but it was recorded for us who would live at the end of the age. As Paul wrote:

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our

admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Corinthians 10:11).

What happened to the ancient Israelites that we should learn from? In regards to the subject at hand, the lesson actually began as they were about to enter the Promised Land. At that time, God warned the people not to worship Him in the way that the current inhabitants worshiped their gods. God warned them and by doing so He warns us:

Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods (Deuteronomy 12:30-31).

In these verses, God made it clear. He does not accept worship or celebration using pagan symbols and holidays. He does not accept practices that are directed toward other gods, no matter how innocent or fun we might think they are.

Therefore, He told Israel that He did not want them to observe the feasts and practices of those who inhabited the land before them. He did not want them to adopt rituals, symbols, or themes from those who worshipped false gods. However, in time, ancient Israel found these seductive practices irresistible. Eventually, both Israel and Judah rejected God's commands and they adopted the worship of Baal with all its trappings.

Ultimately, the Israelites took part in the orgies with temple prostitutes, the worship of Ashtoreth (modern day

Easter) and the burning of their children in fire to Baal. As the Biblical historian wrote:

For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods, and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that *were* not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city. They set up for themselves *sacred* pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, “You shall not do this thing.” Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets” (2 Kings 17:7-13).

While the ancient Israelites did not worship Baal by keeping the later Saturnalia, they did have their own approach to the winter solstice. As Jeremiah later explained, they were dismayed by the signs of the heavens. They saw that the sun would wane during the fall and the days grew shorter as winter approached. Realizing that the sun was the source of all their food, the heathen feared this.

They would cut down a tree, make an idol, and pray for the sun to return (Jer. 10:1-5). This practice has been passed down through time unto Christmas trees that people deck with tinsel, lights, and ornaments, place gifts beneath its branches, and sing songs of praise before a motionless idol.

Israel came to worship the host of heaven, meaning that they worshiped the sun, moon and stars. Because they thought the sun was made of fire, they burned their children in fire to honor this life giving star. Even though God's prophets repeatedly warned them, Israel would not heed. As a result God had to punish them. As the chronicler documented:

Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and *went* after the nations who *were* all around them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them. So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image *and* two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone. Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into

the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight (2 Kings 17:14-20).

God caused Assyria to take the vast majority of Israel into captivity and they were lost to history. Later Judah sinned in these same ways and they were taken captive by Babylon. After the prophecies of Christ being born and dying for mankind were fulfilled, in 70 A.D., their temple was destroyed and the remaining Jews were also scattered.

### ***What about Us?***

God punished ancient Israel for their sins. They would not listen, but what about us today? Will we listen?

Israel honored false gods, drank alcohol to excess, and had their orgies. They did the same kinds of things that people are doing during our New Year's celebrations. Even if you are one of the few who do not drink, or commit fornication, simply acknowledging the observance of New Year's Day is condoning the adoption of pagan rites and is therefore a sin unto God!

In that context, there is something that we absolutely must remember. It is this—God does not change (Mal. 3:6). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb 13:8). His virtue and character have never changed and the statutes, judgments and commandments given to ancient Israel are binding upon Christians today! His appointed time to begin the new year has not been moved to January 1<sup>st</sup>. The time each day begins and ends has never been the middle of the night! Upon realizing this irrefutable truth, consider the God given example of ancient Israel. If He chose to punish them for such sins, would He not punish us too?

It must be understood that hundreds of years went by from the time God gave His warning through the prophets until God finally punished them. Just because He

has not yet punished us, does not mean that His wrath is not coming. He will punish iniquity and disobedience to His Law! If God is always the same, as the Scriptures state, then the same rules will always apply. If He punished Israel in times past, He will punish us in due time!

Christ will return to this earth and it will not be very long from now. When He does, He will rebuke mankind. He will send devastating plagues, earthquakes, and war on the nations of this world. Why? Because of the ways we have chosen to live that mock His holy Law!

We have not followed His commandments. Our lack of morality has greatly polluted society. We are sick with sin and have thrown God out of our government, workplace, schools, and entertainment. We claim that this is the right thing to do and by doing so we call evil good and good evil.

Even the professing Christian community is no different than when the apostate church of Rome began. They have absorbed these ancient pagan practices. They have accepted these primitive symbols and themes of paganism. They have adopted heathen customs just like Israel did in their day.

They have attempted to cloak this holiday's true origins by changing its meaning and symbols to be seemingly harmless and even holy. But God instructs us to never do such things and therefore many are practicing ancient forms of idolatry. It is putting other gods before the true God. The observance of New Year's Day is keeping days other than God has commanded. It is an abomination to Him, and it should also be to us!

### ***Worshiping God in Vain***

Few people would ever believe it, but the Bible says that it is possible to worship God in vain. How can we worship Him in vain? That answer is that we do so when we profess to worship the true God but mix our worship

with the traditions and doctrines of men. Christ explained this principle when speaking of the Pharisees. He said:

Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teach as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7).

People honor God with their lips. They call themselves Christian. They say His name over and over in prayers, praise and song. They profess to accept Jesus, but do not do as He has instructed.

Today, it has become fashionable to think that all we have to do is believe on Jesus and no real changes need to be made in our lives. Many people act as if God has somehow modified His views and standards. They believe that, while He may have condemned these practices years ago, He no longer really cares what we do as long as we have love in our heart. People have been led to believe that they can "get saved" by simply mouthing words, and that the way they live, and the holidays they keep, can remain unchanged.

However, God does not accept those who give Him lip service and refuse to do what He says. He does not accept us observing pagan religious holidays that were created by men and labeling them as Christian. He does not accept celebrations that were once offered to false gods.

Today, millions of people believe that they are worshiping Christ, but they are doing so in vain! They are keeping the traditions and commandments of men. The Saturnalia and its modern Christmas and New Year's Day celebrations are the traditions of men! Those who observe them are doing so against God's will and nothing good will come of it. In fact, the opposite will occur. Their practices will bring painful rebuke from the God they claim to worship.

### ***Is Your Salvation at Stake?***

Upon being informed of these truths, many readers would agree that there are false god's associated with the observance of New Year's Day. They would agree that God set the new year to occur in the spring. They might even agree that the Bible tells us to start the day at sunset. However, most would continue to believe that celebrating New Year's Day is relatively insignificant and will not affect our salvation. Is it possible that such practices can keep a person from obtaining the Kingdom of God? Jesus emphatically says—yes! Notice His words:

Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

Christ clearly stated that we will not make it into the Kingdom of God unless we do the will of His Father. What is the will of the Father in heaven? Does He care about which days we celebrate, or not?

There is a vital truth that we must understand. God cares about everything. He created every single molecule that exists in the entire universe. He knows the purpose for the unique design of all things and how each part of His creation is to work together in harmony. As the Creator, the Almighty has the correct opinion about everything, and His opinion is found in His manual for mankind—the Bible. We must follow what is written in that book, not the traditions of men, or we will lose out!

Contrary to this fact, many claim that Jesus is their Lord. They display crosses around their neck and profess His name. However, these professing believers do not do what Christ has instructed. As He said:

But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46)

This is indeed a question of great magnitude; one having enormous consequences. In effect, Jesus is telling us to not even bother calling Him Lord if we are unwilling to do what he has commanded. So then, what did Jesus tell us to do?

The entire Bible is Jesus in print. He is the great “I Am” that existed since the beginning, and the very God who spoke with Abraham (John 8:58). He is the God that created all things (John 1:3). He is the One who brought the plagues on Egypt, parted the Red Sea and thundered His commandments from Mount Sinai. Therefore, WE MUST LIVE BY EVERY TRUTH FOUND IN HIS BOOK! Every single man and woman who professes belief in Christ should think long and hard about this.

There is not one single part of New Year's Day celebrations that conforms to the Word of God. The truth is contrary to its observance and the Scriptures actually condemn pagan holidays such as New Year's Day! Tragically, people have been misled. They have been seduced by the glitter, champagne, loud party favors and carnal temptations of this day. But if these people do not repent, they will miss out on the greatest opportunity any man or woman could ever hope to have.

For this reason, Christ prophesied of His triumphant return to earth and He warns those who profess belief in Him, but do not keep His words, saying:

Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ (Matthew 7:22-23).

The Messiah spoke of MANY, not a few who claimed to believe on Him. They called Him Lord and did works in His name. Yet, they are told to depart because He

never knew them. They are not His people—why? It is because they were actually workers of iniquity!

But—what exactly is iniquity? The original Greek word means lawlessness. Thus, they were without His law. They claimed to worship Him, but not according to His commands. Christ says this is grounds for losing our chance at the resurrection. The Apostle Paul also stated something very similar. Speaking of the works of the flesh he wrote:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God** (Galatians 5:19-21).

When Paul spoke of the works of the flesh, he is describing various acts and observances that are **just like the New Year's Day celebrations we keep today**. Those who do such things will miss out on their chance to inherit the destiny of mankind—the very Kingdom of God. This fact raises a vital question. Should you continue to celebrate New Year's Day?

### ***God's Holy Days and His Plan***

Coming out of the spiritual Babylon in which we live is not an impossible task. It only takes the will to put our foot down and not allow ourselves to participate in this spiritual fornication. Choosing to stop our observance of the Saturnalia does not mean that we cannot celebrate enjoyable and fun times with our family and friends. Just the opposite is true.

God created days for us to enjoy and celebrate with great zeal. These are not holidays, but are actually holy Days set aside by God for sacred use. God's days are unique in that they are prophetic in nature. They foreshadow things to come (Col. 2:17).

As an example, consider the first of these days—Passover. Christ died on the Passover. This is the beginning of His plan for mankind, not the end.

Next, Christ ascended to the Father on the day that the wave sheaf was lifted and waved for acceptance. Thus, long in advance, this part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread pictured Christ ascending to sit with the Father as our advocate and High Priest.

The Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost. God's people were observing this holy day when the historic miracle occurred (Acts 2). God now made His Spirit widely available to those He would call to be a part of His future family.

The Feast of Trumpets depicts the return of Christ. The Day of Atonement foreshadows the time when Satan will be put away. And, then there is the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day that portray Christ's rule on the earth, and the final end of our human experience when God will create a new heavens and new earth. These three sets of holy days have not been entirely fulfilled. They give us enormous insight into what God is doing with mankind.

What is important to understand is that these unique days reveal pivotal events that mark the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. They have enormous meaning and they give those who keep them amazing understanding of God's plan for mankind. They are also days that are fun, rewarding, and meaningful without hangovers, violence, over indulgence and over spending that leads to debt.

### ***The Wisdom of God***

In the secular world, few ever question what days we celebrate or the way in which we keep them, but God is calling many to leave those pagan ways behind. He is calling us to trust in His wisdom and to live by His ways. It is not too late. There is still time. As the prophet Isaiah wrote:

Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon “For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor *are* your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:6-9).

We may think that there is nothing wrong with New Year's Day celebrations. We may think that it is a small thing, but we need to compare our thoughts with those of God. When we do, we realize that His way is superior! God says that we are to “learn not the way of the heathen” (Jer. 10:1). For most of us, we need to unlearn what we have already been taught.

The observance of New Year's Day began in Babylon 4,000 years ago. It is still practiced today by nearly everyone. Satan the devil has indeed deceived the world into keeping this practice! However, we can know the truth of God's higher way. We can strive to live by that way and enjoy the wonderful benefit God's way of life will bring to us today—and eternal life forevermore.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, video, and audio to help people better understand God's Word and His plan for humanity. Some of the printed material available includes:

*Are the Ten Commandments Required Today?*

*Is This the Only Time of Salvation?*

*The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*

*The Truth about Halloween*

*The Truth about Easter*

*The Truth about Christmas*

*The Truth about Heaven*

*What Does it Mean to be Born Again?*

*The Truth about Valentine's Day*

*The Truth about The Cross*

*The Truth about Mardi Gras*

*The Truth about Heaven*

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