

So You Plan To Keep Christmas Now?

by Mike Ford

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For the sake of argument, let's assume you have decided that Christmas is not the horrible evil you once thought it was. Maybe this year you will have Christmas dinner with your family, and when they draw names for gift giving at the office, you might just join in. You may even go so far as to erect a Christmas tree and deck it with lights.

What is so bad about that? Here in America, Christmas is observed with dazzling lights, greenery and jolly Santas on every corner. Certainly, at least on the surface, it is very beautiful, enticing, harmless entertainment. But is it? We will look at three customs—the use of evergreens, the significance of lights and the giving of dolls—to show what is really being celebrated.

Christmas Trees

When you put up that tree, tack a wreath on the door, and maybe hang mistletoe from the lintel, what are you signifying? John Williamson, in "Christmas Greenery" in the *Dallas Morning News* (December 6, 1986), encapsulates the pagan origin of decorating with evergreens:

Evergreen trees were important fertility emblems for pre-Christian ceremonies marking the winter solstice. People from ancient societies believed that by decorating their homes and temples with evergreen plants, such as holly, ivy and mistletoe, they were helping to carry the diminished sun through a critical period. . . . Mistletoe was the most sacred plant of the Druids. . . . [It] was given great reverence . . . because it grows on the venerated oak. The custom of kissing under the mistletoe comes from the ancient idea that mistletoe is the oak's genitals. And so it was believed that an embrace under its glistening berries was sure guarantee of a fruitful union. . . . The decoration of Christmas trees is a survival of pagan tree veneration. . . . For centuries before Christianity, holly was . . . used . . . for celebrating their midwinter Saturnalia.

While all the greenery in a home decked out for Christmas is beautiful to look at, these customs have nothing at all to do with Christ. In fact, they are sheer paganism directly descended from ancient rites practiced long before Jesus' birth (see Jeremiah 10:1-5). Do you really want to give the impression that you are worshipping a tree? Or that you desire a fruitful union because you give someone a kiss under the mistletoe?

Christmas Lights

What about the lights? Yule logs in the fireplace, candles in the windows, twinkling lights on the tree and the house—they are everywhere. In *The American Book of Days*, Jane M. Hatch writes:

An ancient midwinter festival in Northern Europe was Yule, which celebrated the rebirth of the sun. During these occasions, the northern tribes would light sacred fires as an act of sympathetic magic to ensure the health and vigor of the newly reborn sun.

What it boils down to is that these people were afraid of the dark and the evil spirits they believed inhabited it. They did not want to be at their mercy if the sun should die. But if light could scare away evil spirits, then Satan and his demons would never come near my neighborhood! A neighbor of mine has put up every Christmas decoration that has ever been made—and they all light up! Add to that the millions of lights criss-crossing his roof, porch, fence, deck, mailbox and any kid too slow to get out of the way! Unfortunately, rather than fear these lights, Satan has embraced them as a way to misguide a deceived mankind.

Giving Dolls

How many little girls have received baby dolls or Barbies for Christmas? Millions, probably. Even this practice was inspired by heathen custom! *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edition, under the article "Saturnalia," gives an eye-opening explanation: "These dolls were especially given to children, and the makers of them held a regular fair at this time. Varro [a Roman scholar (116-27 BC)] thought these dolls represented original sacrifices of human beings to the infernal god." The Greeks and Romans gave the names Cronus and Saturn to the cruel Phoenician Baal, to whom they offered human sacrifices. In ancient Carthage, the Phoenicians sacrificed their firstborn children to Baal. Even Israel offered human sacrifices to Molech and Baal in Tophet, later known as the Hinnom Valley or Gehenna (Jeremiah 19:1-6; 32:35).

Satan is still the master deceiver (II Corinthians 11:14). He uses beautiful evergreen trees, islands of light and cute little dolls to make his deceptions seem attractive and harmless. But are they? What could they possibly hurt?

Except for the fact that you would be casting God aside in favor of Satan, you are breaking the very law of God, and you may be forfeiting eternal life, you are also destroying your intellectual honesty, conforming to the ways of this evil world, caving in to convention and reducing yourself to the level of this and past civilizations. This is no laughing matter.

We have seen that even researchers in this world recognize Christmas as a pagan festival. Do you?