**‘Are Christian Observances Actually Christian?’**

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We are nearing December 25 and many people are turning their attention to Christmas. Their thoughts are generally what gifts to get loved ones and friends and where the holiday will be spent. My question, however, is: Should Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus, specifically on December 25? December 25 has been important to pagans for millennia. So, does God care if we celebrate Jesus’ birth on *Saturnalia* (the day of the winter solstice), or on the day celebrated in the ancient world as the birthday of the sun god (Baal – that should sound familiar). Christians put the emphasis on Christ on the 25th right? Doesn’t that remove, cover over, or “trump” all elements paganism?

I am NOT asking if Christians should celebrate Christmas to be argumentative. I truly want to know the answer – from God’s perspective. Clearly there is no command in the Bible that we are to celebrate Jesus’ birth. We’re not told to hold a ‘Christ-mass.’

To be honest, I’m just as perturbed about Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter as I am Christmas. Don’t get me wrong; when I was young, Lent was my favorite season of the Church year. I really enjoyed that contemplative time of the year. I loved the hymns and the messages. And I was particularly grateful that Jesus’ death was NOT the end of him. He rose from the dead three days later, which everyone called ‘Easter.’

The problem is that, once again, Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter all originate in paganism. “Lent originated in the ancient Babylonian mystery religion, and among the Pagans Lent seems to have been an indispensable preliminary to the great annual festival in commemoration of the death and resurrection of Tammuz!”[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftn1)[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftn2)

So, what did the Church do? Were pagan practices given Christian titles to make Christianity attractive to pagans? Was this an evangelistic tool? Not exactly.

Alexander Hislop in his book ***The Two Babylons*** writes, “To conciliate the Pagans to nominal Christianity, Rome, pursuing its usual policy, took measures to get the Christian and Pagan festivals amalgamated, and, by a complicated but skillful adjustment of the calendar, it was found no difficult matter, in general, to get Paganism and Christianity — now far sunk in idolatry — in this as in so many other things, to shake hands.”[[3]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftn3)

Remember the ‘horn’ Daniel saw which is recorded in Daniel 7. An angel explains the vision to Daniel,

23“Thus he said:

‘The fourth beast shall be

A fourth kingdom on earth,

Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,

And shall devour the whole earth,

Trample it and break it in pieces.

24   The ten horns *are* ten kings

*Who* shall arise from this kingdom.

And another shall rise after them;

He shall be different from the first *ones,*

And shall subdue three kings.

25   He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,

Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,

And shall intend to change times and law.

Then *the saints* shall be given into his hand

For a time and times and half a time.

Though the vision Daniel saw pertains to the end of the end times (the times in which we are now living), it appears that the devil was already at work changing times and laws in third century Rome! Unfortunately, his efforts worked. The persecution weary Christians were so tired of being persecuted that they didn’t remain watchful. Their lack of vigilance allowed Emperor Constantine, who had supposedly “converted” to Christianity to begin to introduce paganism into Christianity.

Knowing all of this, the question remains, ‘Does it matter for us today to know that paganism was added to biblical Christianity?’ I believe it does, particularly when the pagan elements are “unknowingly” adhered to far more than what God has actually commanded in the Bible.

As I pondered these thoughts and cried out to God for answer, the Lord answered my prayers by giving me a Bible passage which helped me greatly. The passage is Mark 7:1-13. Here is what the Holy Spirit inspired Mark to write:

1Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4*When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

6He answered and said to them, “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.*

7    *And in vain they worship Me,*

*Teaching* *as doctrines the commandments of men.’*

8For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

9He said to them, “*All too* well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10For Moses said, *‘Honor your father and your mother’*; and, *‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’* 11But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban”—’ (that is, a gift *to God*), 12then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

This is a wonderful passage which informs us of what God thinks of our religious traditions. Through the prophet Isaiah God states clearly,

*‘This people honors Me with* *their lips,*

*But their heart is far from Me.*

7    *And in vain they worship Me,*

*Teaching* *as doctrines the commandments of men.’*

You may be wondering if this passage pertains in any way to Christians. Have Christians ever been guilty of *‘Teaching* *as doctrines the commandments of men.’* Yes we have been and let me give you some examples from the not too distant past. Have you ever heard that someone isn’t a “good” Christian because they drink alcohol, smoke, watch movies, play cards, dance, wear makeup (women), wear their dresses too short (women) or wear their hair too long (men)? I have and it wasn’t THAT long ago. I didn’t grow up in any of the Christian denominations which thought these things were so important, but I did hear of them.

Do any of these so-called “unchristian” practices have anything to do with the Ten Commandments which God **did give** to Moses on Mt. Sinai? No, not one of them do! Every one of them was concocted in the mind of someone other than God.

Let’s now return to the subjects of Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter. It is thought by most people that each of these practices is “Christian,” yet, as we have discovered, every one of them is rooted in paganism. Not one of them was commanded by God for followers of Christ to observe. They are traditions of men and though they are not “Christian” or “biblical” they are practiced by many people as though God DID command them.

Some will respond by telling me that “they” don’t think of the pagan origins of Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, or Easter. They think of Christ. I would agree. Most people don’t think of the pagan origins of Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Easter, or the Season of Lent. **Nevertheless, in the unseen realm, the realm of the spirit, ORIGINS MATTER.** The devil is a master at drawing people away from the truth and he has convinced many generations of believers to take their focus off of what God has actually commanded in order to put it on the traditions he has fooled them into observing.

So, what HAS God commanded? The answer is found in Leviticus 23. There we read,

1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

3 ‘Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it;* it *is* the Sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings.

4 ‘These *are* the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. 5On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the Lord’s Passover. 6And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it. 8But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*’”

9And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10“Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord. 13Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

15 ‘And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. 17You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah.* They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* the firstfruits to the Lord. 18And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a burnt offering to the Lord, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the Lord. 19Then you shall sacrifice one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a peace offering. 20The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *as* a wave offering before the Lord, with the two lambs. They shall be holy to the Lord for the priest. 21And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it. It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22 ‘When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I *am* the Lord your God.’”

23 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘In the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-*rest,* a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25You shall do no customary work *on it;* and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord.’”

26 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 27“Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. 28And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. 29For any person who is not afflicted *in soul* on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32It *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.”

33 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 34“Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the Lord. 35On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it.* 36*For* seven days you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. It *is* a sacred assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it.*

37 ‘These *are* the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—38besides the Sabbaths of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord.

Within these verses are God’s commands regarding the Sabbath, the Passover and unleavened bread, the feast of firstfruits, the feast of weeks, the feast of trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the feast of tabernacles. Do we realize that none of these are actually Jewish feasts? God’s people were the first to observe them, but they aren’t Jewish. God lets us know this extremely important fact in verse 2. There we read, ***‘The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts.’*** These feasts are the LORD’s feasts. Everyone who belongs to Him is to observe them.

There is a very good reason everyone who belongs to the Lord to observe His feasts. First, God commanded that they be observed and second, **His feasts point to Christ! They point to what Christ has already done and what He is going to do.**

Jesus fulfilled the feasts observed in the spring of the year: Passover and unleavened bread, the feast of firstfruits, and the feast of weeks through His death, resurrection, and the giving of Holy Spirit at Pentecost nearly 2000 years ago. His sacrificial death and his resurrection put an end to the need for anymore sacrifices. The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D. was God’s exclamation mark on this fact. The sacrificial system wasn’t needed any longer because Jesus had fulfilled all of the requirements of the Law. Everything the fall feasts point to, the feast of trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and tabernacles, will be fulfilled when Jesus returns to earth in the very near future.

So, why are we observing times and seasons which have pagan origins/roots, which God has not commanded (Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter) BUT we are not keeping the feasts of the LORD which He has commanded and that do point to Christ? I suppose many people will tell me that they didn’t know that the feasts were the LORD’s feasts or that Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter have pagan roots.

Well, now we know. Is there any good reason to continue holding on to our “traditions” while we fail to follow the commands of God? I don’t think there is. And should you want to know the most likely day of Jesus’ birth, check out the message [‘Jesus’ REAL Birthday!’](https://youtu.be/mUqmlTV7bUo) on YouTube. Jonathan Cahn gives an excellent explanation for when Jesus was more than likely born. I’ll give you a hint. It’s very close to Passover which is for a very good reason.

*Kathleen*

[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftnref1) Hislop, Alexander. ***The Two Babylons***, Kindle version 2017, p. 75.

[[2]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftnref2) Tammuz, the counterfeit of Jesus, was the son of Ishtar, the counterfeit of the virgin Mary, from which we get the word Easter and the traditions of Easter bunnies and Easter eggs.

[[3]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2019/11/" \l "_ftnref3) Hislop, Alexander. ***The Two Babylons***, Kindle version 2017, p. 75.