

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IS A FALSE SPIRIT

By Bishop S. C. Johnson

There is a devil inspired spirit which grips the people around December 1st and lasts until the New Year celebrations are ended. This is known as the Christmas or holiday spirit. One of the most outstanding characteristics of this season is giving. Some people who would not give a person money for a sandwich any other time of the year will reach in their pockets and pull out money, saying Merry Christmas. You see, it is the same devil who controls the people and their money all through the year. So then, during the Christmas season, he tells the people to give.

GOD'S PEOPLE SHOULD NEITHER RECEIVE NOR GIVE CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Since the giving during the Christmas season is prompted by the devil, the people of God should not have anything to do with it whatsoever. The Bible tells us to give to those who ask of us, also, to give to those who have need. I know from the many people who have come to me during the years of my ministry, that people ask and need help other than at the time called Christmas. Another reason why saints should not be involved with Christmas giving is, most people give Christmas gifts to those who are able to give them one in return.

What is the difference between giving prompted by the Lord and that which is prompted by the devil? Holy giving is when we give and expect nothing in return, and do not glorify ourselves publicly when giving, while devil-inspired giving is when we give and expect something in return. Devil-inspired giving also is the type which indulges in public display.

THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS A HEATHEN CUSTOM (JEREMIAH 10:1-9)

"Hear ye the word which the Lord speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good. Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O King of nations? for to thee doth it appertain: forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee. But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities. Silver spread into plates is brought from Tarshish, and gold from Uphaz, the work of the workman, and of the hands of the founder; blue and purple is their clothing; they are all the work of cunning men."

Didn't Jeremiah foresee the people of today in his prophetic mind? How they will hammer the tree to the stand so it will not fall; they will deck it and stand back and admire it and then will call their neighbors to help them admire it. The Bible calls those who participate in this type of decoration, "heathens." So, if you hang up any Christmas decorations whatsoever, I will have to call you what the Bible calls you-a **heathen**. God, speaking here through the prophet is telling His people to learn not the way of the heathen.

THE BIBLE DOES NOT TELL THE DATE NOR DOES IT TELL US TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

In none of the announcements of the birth of Christ in the Gospels, or anywhere else in the Bible does it give the date when Jesus was born. The Bible tells us that He was born of a virgin; that He was laid in a manger since there was no room in the inn. It says He was God with us

but nowhere does it say that Jesus was born on the 25th day of December as the world is saying today.

WHERE DID THE CHRISTMAS LIE START?

One of the earliest references we find for elevating the 25th of December as a holiday was in the sixth century B.C. by followers of a pagan religious sect called Zoroastrians. This pagan cult was founded by Zoroaster about 500 B.C. in the Medes and Persians Empire. They celebrated the 25th of December by a ceremony of washing themselves with supposed holy water, burning of incense and chanting what they termed sacred music. This was in adoration of the sun. They approximated the date of the winter solstice marking the return of the sun from his long journey south of the equator, believing it to be, somewhat the birthday of the sun and thought this day signified the revival of the sun's lifegiving benefits to man. We find this celebration carried over hundreds of years afterwards in the late Roman Empire since the sun worshippers of Rome conducted ceremonies to the sun called Brumalia following the Saturnalia (December 17th to 24th) celebrating the shortest day in the year and the new sun or the beginning of the lengthening days. It can plainly be seen that there is no scriptural reference to this date or season since it finds its roots in pagan sun worship; thus clearly showing, the celebration of the 25th day of December was practiced at least 500 years before Christ was born. Therefore, we see that Christ's birth had nothing to do with this date.

This sun worship was too deeply entrenched in the custom of the people to be set aside by the weak backsliding Christians of the Catholic church.

They united the birth of Jesus with the celebration of the sun. The pagan festival to the sun during the late Roman Empire, with its riot and merry making, was so popular that so-called Christians were glad of an opportunity to indulge in it without change of spirit and manner. This festival took great hold of the people and in the 16th century when the

so-called Protestant revolution or reformation was at its climax, while denouncing some of the Catholic practices, they yet clung closely to this pagan festival. Here again is the influence of the heathens or pagans and Jeremiah warned God's people to "Learn not the way of the heathen." You must remember that the Christmas Festival was not celebrated until all of the apostles died and error crept into the church. Now, in 300 A.D. we found an organization weak and backslidden from the truth, and as pagan as pagans themselves.

They tried to combine Zacharias' statement of the month or the day of the event with the "sixth month" mentioned in connection with the annunciation to Mary. This has given no assured results. Hippolytus seems to have been the first to fix Christ's birth on December 25th by calculating nine months from the annunciation or conception, he arrived at December 25th as the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is no evidence that our Lord's birth was celebrated during the Apostolic Age or early Apostolic times. An uncertainty existed at the beginning of the third century. Hippolytus and others favored January 2nd and, Clement of Alexandria, May 20th, while others, according to Clement, fixed the date on April 18th or 19th and March 28th, thus proving that no Christmas festival had been established much before the middle of the century. The earliest records of the recognition of December 25th as a church festival is 336 A.D. in Rome.

Chrysostom states that the celebration of the birth of Christ "according to the flesh" was not inaugurated at Antioch until about 376 A.D. that this festival, approved by himself, was opposed by many. It was celebrated in Alexandria as early as 432 A.D.; in the Jerusalem church it was celebrated January 6th.

The uncertainty of all dates discredits the computation set at December 25th. Also, we should remember that Constantine, the pagan Emperor of Rome had declared himself ruler both of the Roman Empire and head of the so-called church; and eleven years after he had declared and organized the Catholic church, one of the biggest errors hatched out

of those liars mouths was the Christmas celebration. Another thing to remember is that before Constantine's reported conversion, he was a member of this same sun worshippers' cult, and he did everything he could to unite his pagan and so-called Christian subjects.

STOP LYING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SANTA CLAUS

Santa Claus came from the German pagan "good elf" of the forest who was said to give gifts. He is associated with Saint Nicholas, a Catholic Bishop who dressed in a long robe, had a white beard, and gave gifts to the children in his parish who had been good. We get the name from the Dutch settlers in America when trying to pronounce Saint Nicholas in English.

So you see, the entire Christmas festival has derived from either the pagan or Catholic worship; both are one and the same. It cannot be found anywhere in the Bible and anyone is a liar if he says it can be found. I defy any preacher anywhere in the world to prove by the Scriptures that it is right for God's church to celebrate Christmas. Being persuaded to say along with Jeremiah, "Learn not the way of the heathen...for the customs of the people are vain."

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