

Christmas

Christmas isn't in the Bible, but is it Scriptural?

No one knows for certain when Christ was born. The Bible doesn't tell us, either. Nor is there any command, or even suggestion, in either the Old or New Testaments, that we should set aside a day to celebrate Christ's birth. There is no historical evidence from very early church times of Christians keeping a Christmas festival, and no completely convincing proof yet that December 25th was the likely day of his birth. So how, and why, did Christmas become such an important day for Christians, when the Bible is so vague on its origins, and just as vague on the date?

A peek back at how Christmas came to be celebrated on December 25th gives us a clue. It stemmed from the pressure, both inside and outside the Church, to hide what the Father had purposed in Christ. From inside the Church it was Arianism, and from outside the Church it was the worship of Sol, the sun god.

Arianism was deadly, in that it reduced the Son of God to the level of a "creature," or created being. And that not only hid God's purpose in Christ, it destroyed it, because if Jesus hasn't been the Father's Son for eternity he's in no position to make US into sons of God for eternity either, and where's our hope then? The Father's ultimate plan for us in Christ is to adopt us as his children forever, but how can Christ, if he's a **created** being, lift us into an **eternal** relationship with God the Father? Only a being who has always BEEN in that relationship with the Father can do that.

The birth of Christ, therefore, became a subject of major discussion in the Church in the 4th century. Was he born only as a created being, or was he of "the same substance" as God himself? What was at stake was our ability as Christians "to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason **FOR THE HOPE** that you have," **1 Peter 3:15**.

What gives us reason for hope is that "God was pleased to have **all his fullness dwell in him (Christ) and through him to reconcile to himself ALL things, whether things on earth or things in heaven,**" **Colossians 1:20**. What gets us through this human lifetime of ours is the hope that "ALL things in heaven and on earth," **Ephesians 1:10**, will be brought together "under one head, even Christ," because **CHRIST IS FULLY GOD**.

Christians, therefore, are "the first to hope in Christ," **verse 12**, because we realize that Jesus was, is and always will be the eternal Son of God, under whose power, wisdom, brilliance and love, everything that we see in creation and beyond, including ourselves, will be brought together in perfect harmony, peace, and freedom.

There was pressure from outside the Church, however, to put all one's hopes of perfect harmony, peace and freedom in Sol, the pagan sun god. And that was just as deadly because, like Santa Claus today, Sol was a very attractive and appealing substitute for Christ. And his appeal to both non-Christian and Christian alike was much the same as the appeal of Christmas today too, with its festive atmosphere, lights, decorations, bloating oneself on food and drink, and everyone joining in.

What was the Church to do? It couldn't turn a blind eye because as Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 10:20-21**, ["the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons."](#)

There was no doubt that Sol the sun god was of demonic origin too, because HE was being looked to for all the things that only CHRIST could provide. And that smacked of Satan's ultimate plan to get people to worship him, not God. Satan himself made that obvious in **Matthew 4:9** when he told Jesus, ["All this I will give you, if you will bow down and worship me."](#) That's what Satan's after; he wants worship. And Sol the sun god, heralded as the source of life and light, revealed Satan's aims perfectly, because Sol deflected people's attention away from Christ, the **true** source of life and light (John 1:4, 9), just as Santa Claus deflects people's attention away from Christ as the true giver of all good gifts today.

The very same thing is happening today, then, that was happening in the 4th century, meaning we're faced with exactly the same challenge as the church back then too. How much of this Christmas stuff do we go along with when it's obvious what's behind it? Everything about Christmas in the way it's being celebrated today is no different to the way the sun god was worshipped in the 4th century. The similarities are too remarkable to ignore. Santa Claus, for instance, is a perfect replica of the sun god, pictured in his sleigh flying across the sky pulled by reindeer, just as the sun god was pictured in the 4th century flying across the sky in his chariot pulled by griffins, later changed to stags. But it all helps us relate to the predicament the church in the 4th century found itself in, because we're in exactly the same predicament today. The true meaning of God's plan purposed through Christ is being buried under a pile of satanically inspired rituals directing people's worship to Satan and off Jesus Christ. And it set off alarm bells in the 4th century Church - just as Christmas, in the way it's celebrated today, raises serious doubts and questions in the minds of many Christians.

But what could the Church do about it? And 16 centuries later we're faced with the same question. What do WE do when we've got non-Christian relatives (and possibly Christian relatives too) who love Christmas and apply all kinds of pressure to get the whole family involved in "the spirit of the season" and joining in with everything?

Well, we could quote **1 Corinthians 8:6** that “there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live,” and from that verse decide we’re having nothing to do with Christmas because it has nothing to do with Christ - “**BUT,**” **verse 7**, “not everyone knows this.” Paul **also** took into account that most people have no clue as to who and what Christ is, and what God purposed through him.

So what’s the best way of dealing with such people? Is it to condemn and judge them for what they’re doing? Is it to make a stand and say “No” to Christmas and stay away from all family celebrations? Or is it to join in as much as our conscience allows for the sake of peace and unity in the family? It’s a tricky line to walk, because on the one hand it looks like we’re condoning all the Christmas paraphernalia if we go along with it, but on the other hand we sound very condemning of people who love Christmas if we don’t.

So what did Paul advise? It was simple, **1 Corinthians 10:24** - “**Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.**” Paul’s ultimate goal in all his dealings with people was to “try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, **so that they may be saved,**” **verse 33**.

And by “saved” Paul meant what Jesus meant in **Acts 26:18** when Jesus told him to “open people’s eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.” How? By showing people **who the true source of light and life is**, which is exactly what Paul did to King Agrippa four verses later in **verse 22**: “I stand here and testify to small and great alike, that **the Christ** would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, **would proclaim LIGHT to his own people and to the Gentiles,**” **verse 23**.

The best thing Paul could do for others, then, was to get “the lights on” in people’s minds about Christ - and Satan - because, **2 Corinthians 4:4**, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that **they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ.**” Satan hides the truth about Christ, because it’s in Christ, **verse 6**, that “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” (or “the best picture of God we’ll ever get,” as The Message phrases it) is clearly seen. But how do you GET “the lights on” about Christ in people’s minds?

Well, the 4th century Church came up with this idea: You take the exact day and season dedicated to the worship of the sun god and **use it to shed light on CHRIST**, the true “**SUN of righteousness,**” **Malachi 4:2**. It opens people’s eyes to who the REAL source of light and life is - and to Satan’s counterfeit. And it didn’t require any condoning or condemning either. Christians didn’t need to go along with all the sun god rituals to get the point across, and nor did they need to condemn people for blindly following Satan either. They simply took the titles and terms that people applied to the sun god - like “Light of the World” - and applied them to Jesus Christ instead (John 8:12), just like Christians today take “the spirit of giving” that people so love to talk about at Christmas-time and apply it to **Jesus** being the great Spirit Giver of all gifts.

And people don't seem to mind Christians doing that either. When we don't judge or condemn but simply use Christmas to put the spotlight on Christ, people happily hum along with the carols being played in the stores as they shop - carols which WE know blatantly preach the gospel and proclaim Christ as King of the whole world.

What Jesus told Paul to do in Acts 26:18, then, is happening today too. As people stumble around in the darkness, the lights come on about Christ at Christmas. As they careen through life in total blindness under the devil's influence, God's rescue from their blindness through Christ is being preached openly wherever they go for at least a month at Christmas-time. So the gospel isn't being compromised one bit by Christians using the day and season dedicated to the worship of the sun god to shed light on Christ. Quite the opposite, in fact; even in this atheistic, Christian-ridiculing world, **"the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ"** is out in the open and acceptable.

And we can thank the 4th century Church for that, for following Paul's advice exactly and not condemning and judging people for their blindness. And that was the key. Their focus was on SAVING people, not condemning them. When they saw people stumbling around in the darkness, they felt compassion, not ridicule. And like Paul, they wanted to do whatever they could for people **"so that they may be saved"** - or rescued - from their blindness.

They realized something else Paul said too, that Christ has given the Church **"the ministry of reconciliation," 2 Corinthians 5:18**. Christ want us Christians operating on this earth exactly like he did in **his** ministry. And in everything HE said and did he was thinking about and motivated by his Father's plan to **"RECONCILE to himself all things"** - and it's in that spirit that Jesus is now **continuing his work through his Church**.

As Paul said in **verse 20**, **"We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us."** That's the tone God takes. He's APPEALING to people through us. Our job, therefore, is not to condemn people, but to **"implore (them) on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."**

Like Paul, we try to **"please everybody in every way,"** we **"appeal,"** we **"implore,"** we do whatever we can to reconcile people to God and win them over, in the hope that they too **"see the light,"** the TRUE light **"of the glory of Christ."**

And it was that approach in the 4th century that led, amazingly, to Christianity becoming the official religion of the Roman Empire replacing sun worship, to Sunday becoming the day of worship of Christ not the worship of the sun, and to December 25th being celebrated as the birth of Jesus Christ, not the birth of Mithras, or Sol, the sun god. And here we are sixteen hundred years later with a calendar in which the highlight of the year for billions of people is STILL the Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Christ.

Changing the birthday of the sun god into the birth of Christ in the 4th century hasn't been without its problems, though. Pagans still kept their old sun god rituals and Christians got caught up in them just as they do today, which, understandably, has led to some Christians believing we should get rid of everything in the church that originated with pagans, and they are mystified as to why Christians ever chose a pagan celebration in the first place for the birth date of Christ. Because now the pagans are taking Christmas back again, with Christ being replaced by Santa Claus, the gospel being replaced with Disney, and hope for all creation in Jesus Christ being replaced by hope for just the local economy in Black Friday and Christmas shopping.

Wouldn't it be safer and wiser, therefore, especially with Christmas being such a secular day designed purely to make money, to dump Christmas all together from the Christian calendar and create an entirely new celebration with Christ at its centre and no pagan bits allowed a look in at all?

But that would mean the pagans won, wouldn't it? If Christians bow out of Christmas and the pagans take it back again to fill it with all their usual pagan self-indulgence and counterfeits for spirituality, Christians would lose the one great seasonal reminder of Christ and the gospel that even the pagan world can't resist.

Christmas is a massive Christian triumph over paganism, because it simply won't die. Every year like clockwork the carols are played in stores and malls that talk of Christ being born as King of the heavens and earth, and he now rules, bringing in his new creation and new humanity through his church.

Christmas is openly proclaiming that creation no longer belongs to pagans or demons, it belongs to Jesus Christ, and he came to reclaim this planet for God, a wonderful proof of that being Christmas itself, which reclaimed a date used for worshipping a revered pagan sun god to worshipping God and his plan instead, and the pagans haven't been able to stop it. It doesn't matter how much they reject the idea of the world needing a Saviour, or a new world beginning that shows how ridiculous the pagan world is by comparison, Christmas is still the highlight of the calendar and the Christian beat goes on.

So why would Christians give up territory they've held successfully for sixteen hundred years, especially when it so clearly demonstrates that Jesus reigns supreme by the simple fact of history that paganism has never managed to stop Christmas or take Christ out of it? Yes, we need to be careful, that we don't go too far in trying to be all things to all people and find **we've** been deflected off Christ too, but why give up one of the most effective proofs we've got in this world that our God reigns, his kingdom is here, and there is no power on this earth that can stop it? So, yes, Christmas isn't in the Bible, but it has certainly proved itself to be scriptural.