

The Truth about New Year's Day

Arthur V. Braidic
Terry K. Moore

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This booklet explains where the new year celebrations came from, and why so many people observe the day with excessive consumption of alcohol. It also discusses the differing views of the day, and why most believe it to begin in the middle of the night. In addition, we explain the biblical evidence that God's designation and intention has been disregarded by most cultures and authorities for more than 2000 years.

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 ~

Billions of people celebrate each new year on the eve of December 31st and identify the first day of the year to be on January 1st. On the average new year's eve, there are more parties than on any other day of the entire year. Millions shout "Happy new year" as they shake hands, hug, kiss, 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 an average of 50 people will lose their life as a result of a drunk driver that night. Countless numbers will dance to loud music. Bar rooms will churn out drunken debauchery. Many will abandon their inhibitions with illicit affairs.

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 spouse on that night. Tragically, the majority of those marriages will end up in divorce, and thousands of children will be murdered in the womb by abortion.

There is quite a raucous on this night. Some light off fire crackers or fireworks. Others shoot guns into the air, and 1.6 million celebrants are involved in fist fights. As many as 6.8 million will suffer some kind of injury, and 60,000

individuals will spend the night in jail. Thousands will suffer property damage, and what is far worse—people will die as a result of New Year's Eve celebrations.

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 the new year? Where did this holiday come from? Who determined the year to begin on January 1st in the middle of the night? 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 people do not celebrate this day because it is the beginning of the new year. They do not party because it honors God. It is because they have been deceived by wiles of the devil:

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 most Christians have been deceived to some extent. However, if we are discerning, the evidence can be recognized and it is everywhere!

In this age of multiculturalism and widespread acceptance of diverse religions and sexual preferences, many often think that evil is good. We believe that the way to peace is found in war. We protect criminals and punish victims. Many treat animals with more respect than human babies in the womb. We reject God in our society and think we are doing good. We celebrate ancient pagan holidays that honor promiscuity and demons. 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 winter, at midnight, when God told us that the day begins at sundown, and the year begins in the Spring (Exo. 12:1-2).

The Beginning 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? Could it have something to do with the beings that are called "spiritual hosts of wickedness" and "rulers of darkness?" (Eph. 6:12).

Although we do not know exactly when people began using midnight to begin the day, there are clues to its origin. First, we must realize that God is known as the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:9-22). He is the Eternal—declaring 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 close when the sun sets on the horizon. This is a sign that all are able to see without a need for a watch or clock. As the light begins to fade on the horizon, one day has ended and another has begun. That is why God ensured that the following sequence was recorded:

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

God split the day into two parts, day and night, He defined the night portion as beginning with evening, and the day with morning. Therefore, it has been predetermined when each day begins. It is found in the order that these events occurred shortly before God created the first man and woman. If this were not clear enough, God stated the same process six times in the first chapter of the Bible. The evening and the morning were not only the first day, the second day, the third, fourth, and so on (Gen. 1:5-31).

The day ends when the sun sets—in the evening, and the next day begins a second later. This is confirmed in other places of the Bible. For example, speaking of the Day of Atonement and the requirement of fasting for a 24-hour period, 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 the manmade assertion 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. Though many must use the Gregorian calendar for business purposes, and recognize man's determination of a 24-hour day beginning at midnight, they are not times that we should celebrate. The Apostle Peter said that those who are called are to come "out of darkness and into His marvelous light" (1Pet. 2:9).

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 were 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 their 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 a Year

God told us when to start and end the day, but what about the year? Does He give us instructions for that? 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:

On this day you are going out, in the month Abib (Exodus 13:4).

This means that the first day of Abib is the first day of the year. The month of Abib has always occurred from mid-March to mid-April indicating 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.

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!

Different Strokes—of the Clock—for Different Folks

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. 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).

Many are the customs connected with the celebration of New Year's Day; some purely Pagan, some with a Christian colouring (*Festivals, Holy Days, and Saints' Days*. p. 1)

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 14th. In Iran, the year begins on March 21st, and many Chinese celebrate the new year from January 21st through February 19th. During the middle ages, most European countries used March 25th as the beginning of the year, but by the 1600's many western nations adopted a revised Justinian calendar which is still used today. Great Britain and its American colonies adopted January 1st as New Year's Day in 1752.

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, where did this observance begin? 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 feasting; 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:

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).

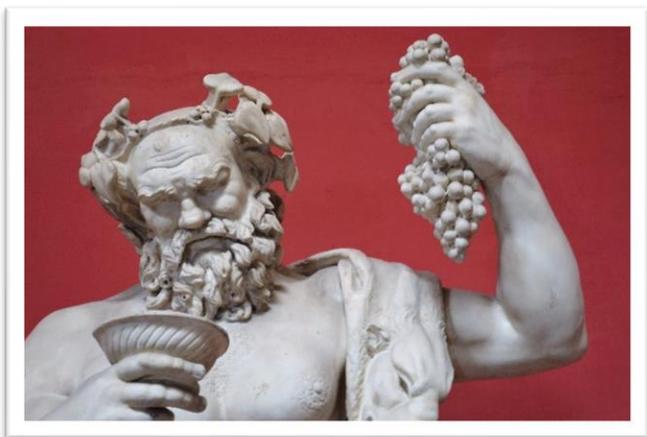
The New Year's Babe – a Pagan God

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 Dions 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*, pp. 67-68).



Sarcophagus mentioned above (c. 101-200 AD)



Statue of Dionysus from the Vatican Museum

The symbol of a baby for the new year was common in pagan practice, and the religious organization that became known as the Roman 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 excessive amounts of alcohol. 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, we are still paying homage to a mythical god of alcohol! Our attitude is no different than that of the ancient primitive religions in which they over indulge 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 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. This supposed quaint character is an extension of another Greek god known as Cronus. It is from his name that we have the term “chronograph,” relating to the measurement of time.

Cronus 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 Cronus 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).

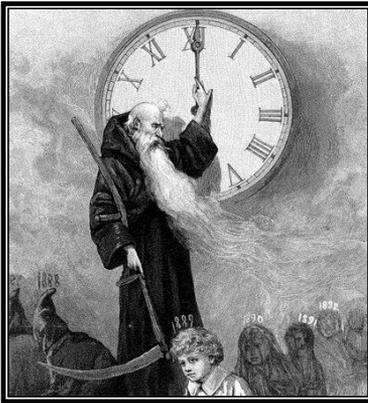
Cronus was portrayed as killing his own children and eating the bodies. This became a Greek rite of human sacrifice that occasionally took place during the Saturnalia. The morbid legend led to Cronus being referred to as the Grim Reaper. Images of these characters contain striking resemblance and continue to reflect their ancient mythological past.



Mural of Rhea handing Cronus a swaddled baby



Cronus



Father Time



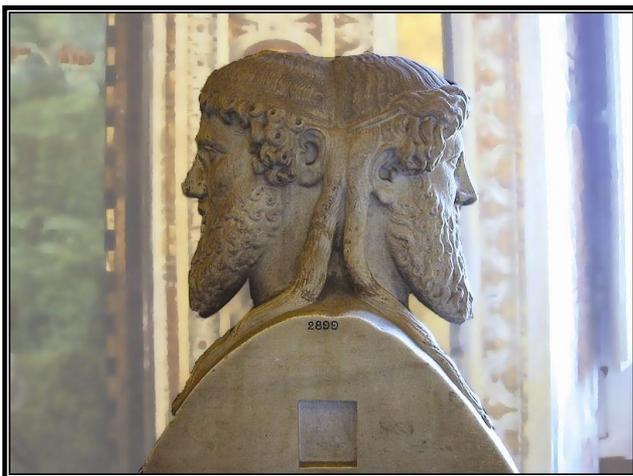
Grim Reaper

January – a Pagan God

Another pagan god that plays a role in this holiday 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 faces 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 again 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).



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 celebration of the new year? 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 the devil suggested that Christ 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:

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 Cronus—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:

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 (1Corinthians 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 also sent a warning to 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, and the burning of their children in fire to Baal:

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" (2Kings 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:

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 (2Kings 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 Should You Do?

God punished ancient Israel for their sins. They would not listen, but what about us today? Will we listen? Israel honored false gods, drank excessive amounts of alcohol, and had their orgies. They did the same kinds of things that people are doing during New Year's celebrations today. Even if you are one of the few who do not get drunk, and do not fornicate, simply acknowledging the observance of New Year's Day is condoning pagan rites and is therefore a sin.

In that context, there is something that we absolutely must remember. God does not change (Mal. 3:6). Jesus Christ is the God of old, and He 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 1st. 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 punished us does not mean that His wrath is not coming. He will punish iniquity and disobedience to His Law! If God's character remains the same, then the same rules will always apply. If He punished Israel in times past, He will punish those who honor false gods 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 and the planet. 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!

Worshipping God in Vain

Few people would ever believe that this could be them, but the Bible says that it is possible for those who believe to worship Him in vain. It can be done when we profess to revere God, when we claim Jesus Christ as Lord, but allow behavior based on heathen religion and doctrines of men. Christ explained this principle, saying to believers:

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, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7).

People might call themselves Christian, Jewish, Mormon, Catholic, or Messianic. They might say His name over and over in prayers, praise, and song. They may profess to accept Him as their Savior, but it is all in vain if they do not do as He instructed.

It has become fashionable to think that all we have to do is believe, and no real changes need to be made in our lives. Many people act as if God has somehow modified His standards. They believe that, while He may have condemned pagan practices years ago, He no longer 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 a few words without little effort to change their behavior.

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.

Millions of people continue to believe that they are worshipping Christ, but they are doing so in vain! The Saturnalia and its modern Christmas and New Year's Day

celebrations are such 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.

Your Salvation is at Stake

Upon being informed of these truths, many readers would agree that there are false gods 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 Heaven 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 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. During the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Christ ascended to the Father on the day that the wave sheaf was lifted up and waved for acceptance. Thus, long in advance, this event pictured Christ becoming 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, and this day also represents the day when some will literally be born again.

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 holy days have not been entirely fulfilled. They give us enormous insight into what God is doing with mankind. For more about this subject, read our book—*The Magnificent Meaning of God's Holy Days*.

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 they celebrate or reasons for the way in which they keep them, but God is calling many to leave those deeply rooted pagan ways behind. He is calling for you to trust in His wisdom and live by His moral ways. It is not too late to change. 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, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

The Magnificent Meaning of God's Holy Days

The Truth about Christmas

The Truth about Halloween

The Truth about Easter

This is Not the Only Time of Salvation

Are the Ten Commandments Required Today?

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God

The Truth about Heaven

What it Means to be Born Again

The Shocking Truth about Valentine's Day

The Truth about The Cross

The Truth about Mardi Gras and related holidays

The Eternal Church of God
PO Box 80248
Billings, MT 59108
USA

eternalcog.org