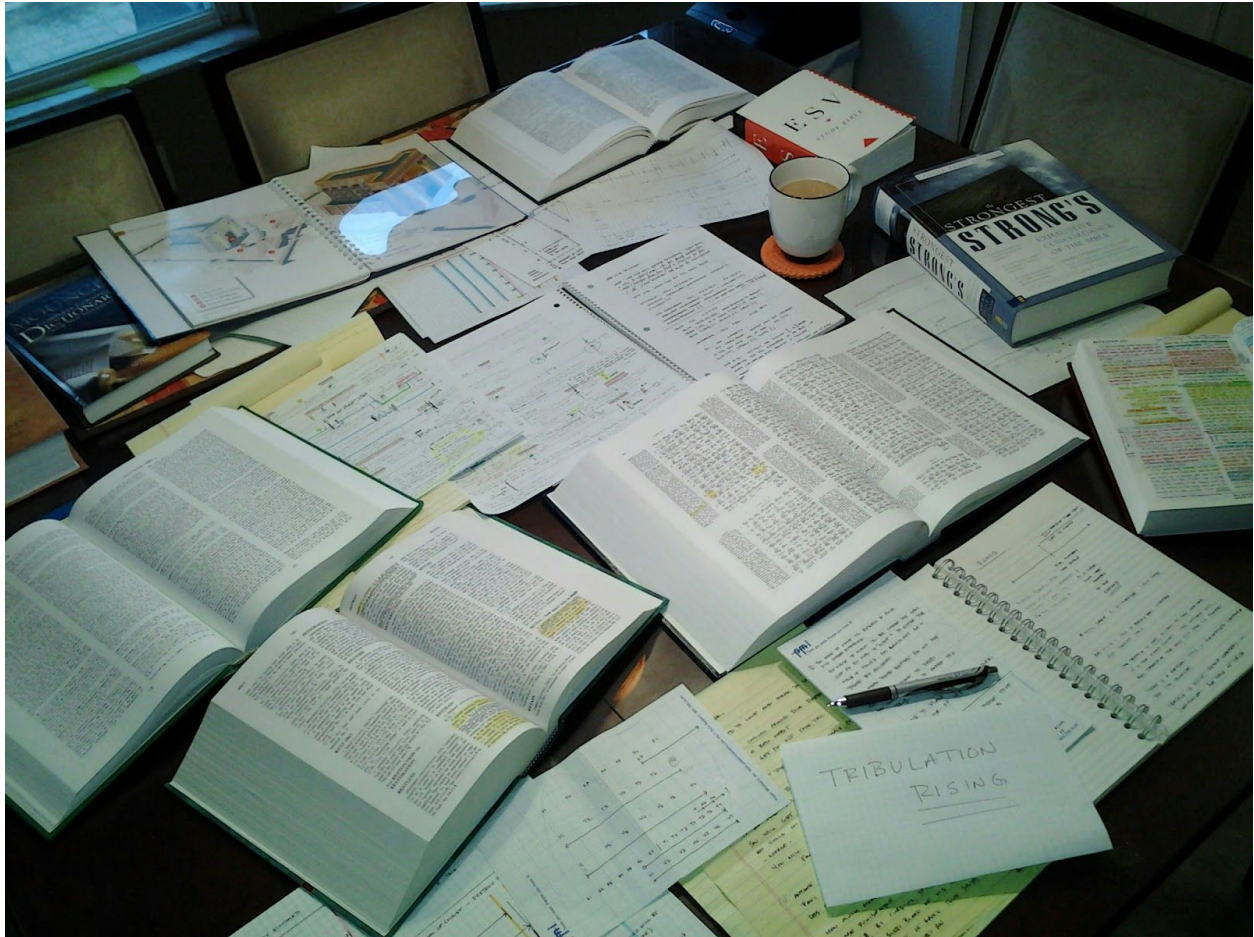


# **TRIBULATION RISING: THE SERIES**



## **CAN CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS** **AND EASTER?**

**RICHARD KENDRICK JR.**

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# CAN CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE EASTER AND CHRISTMAS?



*But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*

*Hebrews 9:11-14*

I originally wrote this in response to the sudden rise of believers questioning the celebrations of Easter and Christmas. It was more for Easter since that is when I wrote this, but the principles apply for Christmas as well.

\*Since the first edition of this project, the Lord has expanded the content to deal more with Christmas.

On face value this is an odd subject for a site dealing with the tribulation. However, at its heart, the celebration of Easter Sunday and the resurrection of Christ is the essence of the Blessed Hope – the promise of the soon return of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is part and parcel to understanding the

martyrdom that will occur during the tribulation and why the rapture actually occurs.

As we dig into this project, there are several points that we can address with regards to the actual day of the birth of Christ. There have been many attempts to pinpoint the specific day that Jesus was born, and to tie His birth to the Feast Days of either Passover or Sukkot. Most of these efforts center around three pieces of information – the conception and birth of John the Baptist, the course of priests at the Temple, and the time of the conception of Christ in relationship to John.

Without exception, nearly every such effort I have seen centers on the work of men attempting to gain Godly insights under their own power. This is how false doctrine is born. I will not rehash these same arguments, as every last one I have ever seen misses two undeniable points in scripture:

First, though it appears otherwise, the Bible does not say exactly when Jesus was conceived in relation to John the Baptist.

Rather, the Bible tells us when the conversation occurs between Mary and Elizabeth – not that this was the time of the conception of Christ, or that Christ had already been conceived. Likewise, this same conversation does not declare that Mary is already pregnant. It simply acknowledges the fact that Mary is the mother.

“Doesn’t that mean that she is already pregnant?”

No, it does not. It means only that her coming fate is known and accepted. She was considered the mother of the Savior from the moment the angel of God revealed the same to Mary, Joseph and Elizabeth. Go back through and reread

the text. Ask yourself what is actually being spoken. Look to the original Greek as well for greater clarity.

We see this same premise other places in the Bible as well. Abraham was called the father of many nations long before he had his first child. Not only that, but this is a prophetic title which has not yet been completely fulfilled. We will not see the final fruition of Abraham's title until the millennial reign of Christ. It is only in this time period where it is Israel alone that rules all the earth, and the Jews alone which enter the earthly kingdom of Christ as living human beings.

One of the more confusing arguments against December 25th is that the course of Abia makes it impossible that Jesus was born on the 25th. This is a massive subject, one in which most people are not able to formulate a defense for. The reason is the complexities of the service of the priests in the Temple.

Here is an excerpt from a David Gibson article from the Bible League Quarterly that highlights an interesting point that really strikes at the argument against a possible December 25th date:

### The course of Abia

From the evidence for date furnished by the narrative of the shepherds we turn to that supplied by 'The course of Abia', mentioned in Luke 1:5. King David had divided the priests into 24 courses, to serve in rotation. This they evidently did down to the time of the Babylonian Captivity. After the Captivity the courses were started again, and were still officiating in weekly rotation in New Testament times. It appears, however, that only four of the original 24 courses returned with the remnant of the nation to the land of Israel, the missing courses being filled by proxy from the four. To make matters even more difficult, the Bible

names several 'courses' after the Captivity which cannot be identified with any of the original ones. It therefore follows that there is no certainty about the time of year when the course of Abia would be officiating. Nevertheless, such evidence as is available is favorable to the December dating of the Incarnation. It is necessary to look for the nearest datable reference to one of the courses, and from that to reach by calculation the year mentioned in Luke 1:5. On this matter it is helpful again to quote from the pages of Dr. Edersheim:

"In Taan. 29"-i.e., the Talmudic Tractate Taanith, on Fasting and Fast-days -"we have the notice, with which that of Josephus agrees (War 6:4, 1, 5), that at the time of the destruction of the Temple, 'the course of Jehoiarib, which was the first of the priestly courses, was on duty.

That was on the 9-10 Ab of the year 823 A.U.C." (i.e., in Roman reckoning), "or the 5th August of the year 70 of our era. If this calculation be correct(of which, however, we cannot feel quite sure), then counting 'the courses' of priests backwards, the course of Abia would, in the year 748 A.U.C. (the year before the birth of Christ) have been on duty from the 2nd to the 9th of October. This also would place the birth of Christ in the end of December of the following year (749), taking the expression 'sixth month' in St. Luke 1:26, 36, in the sense of the running month (from the 5th to the 6th month: comp. St. Luke 1:24).But we repeat that absolute reliance cannot be placed on such calculations, at least so far as regards month and day".

For what this evidence is worth, therefore, it would appear that the Bible's mention of 'the course of Abia' is in favor of a December Nativity for our Lord Jesus Christ. ~~~

Stated differently, when you take the accepted schedule of services that critics of Christmas, December 25th, and 6 month argument also used in that respect,



and work backwards from the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, it puts the conception of Christ in the spring.

That means that the end of December would be the nine month mark.

That said, we have already addressed the error in declaring a sixth month certainty in the conception of Christ. For that matter, it needs said that the issue is not determining the exact date for the birth of Christ. Rather, it's the mathematical certainty that critics claim in declaring that December 25th cannot possibly be the date of the Savior's birth.

However, there are several other factors that make it impossible to declare that December 25th is not the date of the birth.

As John Gibson noted, there is no degree of certainty with which we can know when the course of Abia actually served with the return from Babylon. This uncertainty is compounded by another problem.

Each course served twice a year in the weekly service, and once for a three week stretch in which all the courses were present at the Temple. Here is the problem – the Bible does not indicate which yearly service Abia was completing. We do not know whether it was the first or second tour of duty. When combined with the issues of the return from Babylon, the entire year is now open to the possibility as the time of service.

Now, for the second point, Jesus could not have been born on either Passover or Sukkot. The reason is simple – these were pilgrimage feasts in the Law of Moses. In other words, the Messiah could not have been born in Bethlehem on either day, or His birth would have been a violation of God's own law. Jesus would have been born in Jerusalem had His birth occurred on the Feast Days.

On the pilgrimage feasts, every male Jew was required to go to Jerusalem for the feast day. Joseph could not have returned to Bethlehem for the Roman census on the feast days. Nor could he have ignored the census in favor of the feast.

Even the argument that Bethlehem was but a mere “five miles away” (as I saw in one such debate) is problematic at best. First off, the distance is closer to seven miles, given that the modern estimate are always based border to border. Jerusalem was a much smaller city in the days of Christ, as was Bethlehem.

This particular argument attempts to establish that Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (we will cover the reasons why in just a few moments). Once there, they would have slipped down to Bethlehem for the census. This argument attempts to establish mental picture that is absolutely untenable. It wants to set the premise that they simply hopped on a horse (or donkey), rolled on down to Bethlehem in an hour, would register in 15 minutes, and be back in Jerusalem before lunch. This premise would have held not just for the first day of Tabernacles, but for all seven days.

Though, to be officially considered “born” on Tabernacles, the actual birth would have needed to occur on the first day – just as Jesus had to rise from the dead on the first day of First Fruits.

There are several things that this argument absolutely hinges on you to forget, in order that it be considered viable:

1. Mary was ready to give birth. I have never given birth, but I suspect that I am not out of line when I say that most expectant mothers are not going on a 14 mile donkey ride when they are ready to go into labor.

2. The image of a short “five mile journey” relies on deception, as it wants you to apply a modern picture to an ancient situation. Five miles in your car, on paved roads IS NOT the same as five miles on a donkey, on dirt roads, while on the verge of going into labor.

3. This premise requires that you forget that Mary went into labor in Bethlehem, and it was on the Feast Day according to critics of Christmas.

That means that Joseph and Mary would have either been passing through Bethlehem prior to traveling on to Jerusalem for the Feast, or that they arrived in Jerusalem several days in advance, and attempted to get to Bethlehem several days before the Feast began. So, why are both of these possibilities a problem?

Both require Mary and Joseph to be in Bethlehem on the Feast Day, in order that Jesus could fulfill this particular prophecy. We will cover this more in just a moment.

There is something else that needs addressed. In the story of the birth of the Savior, the Bible tells us that the reason that Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem was for the census. In fact, this is the sole reason given for their travels. Here is why this presents a problem. Elsewhere in the Gospels, whenever the life of Jesus intersected the Feast Days and celebrations of Israel it is mentioned. We know of every time worth noting that Jesus was somehow involved in the Feast Days.

Let me state that differently. Anytime the Bible records the periods in the life of Jesus we always have the intersection with the Feast Days mentioned, when they are of special and specific note to the occasion being recorded. All of the important moments in the life of the Savior are recorded in specific detail, None

of those moments are possible without the single most critical event outside the cross – His birth.

Yet, the event that is most worth noting is the Roman census? Joseph and Mary trying to make the Feast of Tabernacles does not rate so much as a mere mention? Even the argument that John 1:14 is an allusion to a Tabernacles birth is problematic.

John 1:14 KJV – And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The argument goes that the word “dwelt” is “tabernacle” in the Greek. As such, it is a coded reference to a birth on the Feast of Tabernacles. I am no stranger to the mysteries that the Lord encoded in the scriptures. Trib Rising is full of examples on nearly every project. However, every such encoded truth has more than a single word association as it’s evidence.

“Dwelt” used here is a form of the word which gives us “tabernacle”. However, the root of this word appears in transliteration nearly 60 times in the New Testament – all indicating some form of dwelling. In other words, the word used in John 1:14 was chosen specifically because it was the word that simply described the event in question. Jesus Christ was born, and He lived among men.

The same word would have been used of Peter, Paul, John, Judas, Pilate – or anybody else that the Bible wanted to show as dwelling among men in the fashion described in the verse.

There is another troubling aspect to this argument.

It is the fact that critics of Christmas want to use the Greek language as “proof” that December 25th is the wrong date. Here is why. The arguments against Christmas were born in the Hebrew Roots Movement (HRM). The very heart of HRM is that the New Testament was written in Hebrew (or Aramaic, depending on the particular slant), and that it was later translated into Greek.

I will be releasing a new project shortly that details this dispute in great detail. The nickel version is that we must get back to the original Hebrew New Testament in order to truly understand the scriptures. HRM holds that the Greek NT is a Roman conspiracy, and that it is corrupt (the Bible is wrong, in other words). This premise is used to justify reverse engineering the Bible to get the original Hebrew words.

The result has been any number of Bibles that claim to be the only accurate Bibles (the Cipher, AENT, etc.). It has also been a redefining of scripture that proves that we are still under the law, and required to keep the Torah.

The soon to be released project will detail the dangers of this movement, and several prophetic warnings that show certain destruction for any believer that falls into this dangerous end times deception.

The irony in all of this is that for their purposes, HRM discredits ANY and ALL Greek understanding where it conflicts with their Torah compliant theology. This includes pushing the entire litany of arguments against Christmas and Easter on the basis of the “pagan origins”. However, this one time, they suddenly find that the Greek is their friend, as it provides the “proof” that Jesus must have been born on the Feast of Tabernacles!

Now, ask them to apply the same logic to Matthew 5:17-20!

Another false premise that the Feast Day theory relies on is the “quick census” occurrence. Here is what I mean. When the census is discussed, it is never done so from the standpoint of exactly what it meant to undertake such a task. It is always viewed through the same lens. You show up one day, take five minutes, sign a scroll, and that’s it. It is always from a premise that the census was a relatively short lived event, concluding in just a few short days.

I see many arguments on the overall timing of the census. Those deal with the Governor of Syria, Cyrenius, and what are perceived to be discrepancies in the account of Luke. Even these drive me nuts. The premise behind these arguments stems in trying to date the year Christ was born, the account in Luke, and how it does not mesh with Josephus the historian. With few exceptions, these arguments nearly always stem from the same starting position – Luke must have been wrong because Josephus recorded something different.

*Here is a little tidbit that you would do well to remember. If you are a believer, and yet you are argue anything in the Bible from the position that it is the Bible that is wrong, and not the secular human source – you will NEVER know and understand the deeper truths of the Bible! Why is this you ask? Simple.*

*You have already decided that God is a liar.*

*Before you blow your stack, ask yourself this. What else could it mean when you declare that Luke MUST be the one who is wrong, and Josephus the one who is right? Remember, we are talking about the Bible – the inerrant word of God.*

When it comes to the census, there are several things that most do not understand. When the Emperor of Rome decreed anything for the empire, it did not happen overnight. It took months.

Once the decision was made in Rome, the scribes would have to take and copy the orders to all the provinces. This was done by hand. If the decree would go to every province, this could take several weeks to complete. If it went to the ranking provinces only (to then be copied and distributed by the ranking Roman Governor and Senator to his junior Governors), then it went little faster.

Once written, signed and sealed, the decrees would go forth to the ends of the empire. The furthest ends of the empire required up to five months of travel one way. To reach Israel, a decree required 124 days of land and sea travel – to Antioch. From there, the decree traveled by land to Syria, which took another week or so.

Once arriving in Syria, the senior Governor for the entire region (which included Israel) would then read the orders and dispatch the decrees to his subordinates. This took another couple of weeks.

From this point, the local governors would plan for the execution of the decree. Each local Governor throughout the entire empire would make the required public notice. In this case, the notice would be that every male must return to their home of birth to be officially registered.

This literally meant that a Governor in Britain would effectively order a male subject to journey across the empire to reach his homeland – in Egypt – or vice versa! This could require a journey of six to nine months, depending on the locations discussed. Understand that this was known and accounted for in

Rome. Even Roman officials were given four months to travel back to Rome when recalled. This included members of the legions as well.

The period of public notice would have lasted several months, as many citizens of the empire lived away from towns and cities. It could be weeks before they were in a position to receive the notice. Once the period of public notice began, the census would also officially begin. It could run for months, and would be conducted at the tax collection stations – which ran year round. In fact, a census could last for a year or more if necessary. Typically, though, a period of three to six months was all that was needed once it was started. Remember, however, the process has already lasted for six to nine months to this point – and that is without so much as a single name being recorded!

Once the census was completed in each province, the reverse process would begin. The records would be sealed and sent to the capital province. In this case it would be Syria again. Over the next month the census records would be stored until all of the provinces had submitted their entries. It was at this point that all the census records would start the 124 day journey back to Rome.

Now, if the census records were ordered held in the provinces, then the senior Governor would collect all the records as required. He would then be required to compile a summary tally for submission to Rome. This process could take a month or more. The summary record would then make the 124 day journey to Rome, for submission to the Emperor and Senate.

The simple one day census that nobody seems to think about – it was at minimum a year in the making!

There is something else. There would not have been an assigned day to report on. There would have been only the requirement that you depart for the census



station as soon as you received notice. This is why Joseph had to take Mary while she was pregnant. Rome did not care that she was close to labor.

However, what Rome did care about was trying to keep the peace in the provinces. This is going to shock many of you. By legal practice, Rome would not have required the Jews to register for the census on the Feast Days, or even close to them. The census itself was already a bone of contention, as the census was seen as a violation of the Torah in many circles – and with good reason.

Whenever possible, Rome tried to steer clear of religious controversy. Of course, this was not always possible. The Jews were notoriously difficult to govern, and Rome's officials were not always the pillars of civility. However, on balance, Rome was able to keep the peace in most of its territories through this policy.

Rome's policy of letting the local religious customs stand unmolested led to some stressful moments during the tenure of Pilate. His handling of civil disorder during the Feast Days led to a massacre that almost cost him everything. Tiberius delivered a stern warning to Pilate that if he had another such incident, it would mean the end of him. This was a fairly harsh treatment of a Governor that was related to the Emperor through marriage, belonged to the order of the "friend of the Emperor", and had successfully quelled a rebellion before it became a rebellion.

This warning was the leverage that the High Priest needed to "convince" Pilate that Jesus needed to die. The reference to Pilate not being a "friend of Caesar" was not just some random statement with no meaning. It was an overt threat

that the Jews would take the matter directly to Caesar himself if Pilate did not comply with their demands.

No, the census would have been conducted independent the Feast Days. This is why the Bible tells us that there was no room at the inn. It was not due to the Feast of Tabernacles, as this would have required every male to be in Jerusalem – not Bethlehem. They would not be at the inn. They would be in rough shelters built for the feast. More on this in a moment.

The inn was full for the same reason that Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem at this most inopportune time. Everybody else in Israel was headed home as well. They were not headed to Jerusalem as a nation. Only those born in Jerusalem headed for the capital. Everybody else headed for the place of their birth. They did so immediately after they had received the notice of the census.

There could be no controversy surrounding the birth of the Savior. Just as Jesus had to be in the tomb in time for the three witnesses to return home before Passover commenced, so must his birth occur with no red flags or issues that cast doubt in the hearts and minds of men. Such controversy comes, but as a result of the adversary. It comes absent any such evidence, or the appearance of any such evidence.

Joseph was with Mary at the birth of Jesus. He was not going to leave her side as she was ready to give birth. He would not have needed to. In fact, the very first year of the marriage would have been a time of rest, where the husband and wife would remain with each other. There would be no work for the entire year! Joseph would not travel to Jerusalem without his new wife – and that is without the issue of a full term pregnancy.

Even the appearance that God might have required such would cast a dark shadow over the birth of the Savior. One of the resounding themes throughout the Bible is the love of the Bridegroom for the Bride. Be it Jesus for the Church, God the Father for Israel, or the man for the woman. For God to have required Joseph to leave Mary behind to fend for herself in the giving birth of the Savior would violate His own Laws concerning how a husband is to love his wife.

There is something in the law called the “appearance of impropriety”. It is a legal doctrine that tells us that even the appearance of wrongdoing can cast a cloud of guilt over the accused party. This is critical to understand for this reason. All of this would be part and parcel to the trial and death of Jesus.

Have you ever really looked at the line of questioning that Jesus endured? How about the reason behind Pilate washing his hands after the declaration of death?

Did you know that even the timing of the trial was specifically chosen? I am not talking in regards to Passover. Rather, I am talking about the reign of Tiberius Caesar. The trial of Jesus had to happen under Tiberius. It could not happen under Augustus or Julius Caesar.

All of these things join with the avoidance of the appearance of impropriety in the life, times, trial and death of Jesus. When the time came for His death, He had to be the perfect sinless lamb. Not even a single appearance of a blemish could be found on the Lamb.

That brings up another area worth noting. In an upcoming project, I will detail something I refer to as “top down, bottom up” theology. It is the practice of letting the copies of the real things in heaven take their proper place as the pictures, and not the standards that must actually be met. In this, we see the

answers to the questions about the birth of Jesus in the selection of the Passover Lamb.

The Passover Lamb had to live its life indistinguishable from all of the other lambs, except in its appearance and perfection. It was not called out as special before it was chosen. At its birth it was acknowledged as a viable candidate – provided that nothing occurred between that time and the Passover in which it would be sacrificed. However, once this occurred, there would be nothing special or of note about this lamb. To the contrary, it had to come from among the flock, from the lowest of stations.

When you delve into the Old Testament prophecies concerning the birth of the Savior, you find that there could be NO special circumstance surrounding His birth. The only exception to this was the appearance of the star, the witnesses to the birth of the King, and the declaration through the giving of the gifts. These events were not tied to His status as the Passover Lamb, however.

They were the confirmation of His coming status as the King of Israel.

His status as the Passover Lamb ensures that the Savior would not be born on the Feast Days, as such an event would have been taken for a sign, and used to the designs of men (much as it is being used now to subvert the faith). When a Passover or Tabernacles birth would have been combined with the ministry and miracles Jesus performed, it would have only served to strengthen the calls for Jesus to stand up as the earthly King of Israel. It would have also been used against Him in the trial, and cast a shadow over the proceedings.

The lack of any prophecy declaring that the Messiah would be born on a Feast Day would have cast a shadow over Jesus in the minds of those around Him.

How many do not know that there is no prophecy that actually declares that Jesus would be born on a Feast Day? Think about that for a moment. Scholars place the total number of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled (all found in the Old Testament) at over 400. Yet, there is not a single prophetic reference to the Messiah being born on a Feast day. Neither is there any scripture that links the Passover Lamb to a birth on the Feast Days either.

Yet, why then do so many believers seem bent on declaring something that the Bible does not? For that matter, how is it possible that such an important piece of information could get left out of both the direct prophecies, and of the prophetic pictures?

Getting back to the Bride and Bridegroom, it is worth noting that this year off is a prophetic picture of the last year of the coming tribulation, and the coming 1,000 year reign. As such, it is not negotiable in the question of the birth of the Savior.

This was the birth of Messiah prophesied by the Most High God. The exact timing and location was in the hands of the Father in Heaven. Sadly, this is something that cannot go without saying, as many would instantly desire to argue about the possibility of accidents and unplanned episodes during the birth, and even the conception period.

In other words, Jesus was going to be born in the exact location determined by God, at the exact time determined by God – and in perfect fulfillment of the Law of God. Nothing else is even possible.

If Jesus is born in Jerusalem He could not have been the Messiah.

If Jesus was born on the Feast Days he could not have been Messiah.

As I just said, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the perfect fulfillment of the Law of Moses, and the exact details of His birth were prophesied. Just as His death was foretold in the Law of Moses as the Passover Lamb, His birth would likewise be foretold as a fulfillment of the feast days if it were in fact so.

Now, this does not mean that He was not born near the feast days, nor does it mean that He was born on December 25th. However, it does not preclude the possibility of a birth on December 25th either.

It simply means that we do not know when Jesus was conceived or born. Just as the Law of Moses has no timing requirement for the birth of the Passover Lamb, there is no requirement for the birth of the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb. There are only requirements to the age, condition, keeping, etc. at the time of its death.

There is one other factor that needs to be considered. In ancient Israel, the entire time from conception to physical birth was considered the birth process. It would be said that a Jew was born for a nine month period. While the physical birth could not have occurred on the Feast Days, the conception could.

If Jesus was conceived on Passover, His physical birth would have been in time for December 25th. Understand that many try to discount the possibility of a December 25th birth, and do so by declaring that there is no evidence from the early church which shows December 25th – this is not accurate. It is worth your time to research. There is accepted evidence from early church fathers which both indicate and declare December 25th as the day of the physical birth. We will speak to that in a moment.

One of the more interesting arguments against December 25th is rendered on the basis that the sheep could not have been in the fields in the winter, therefore the winter account is wrong.

The theory that the sheep would not be pastured in the winter is one such example. This, like so many other false theories, found life in a counterfeit process that mimics a process used by the Lord. It appears to be the same process at first examination. However, the proof is in the pudding. These two apparently identical processes yield very different fruit. Here is how it works.

With our “no sheep outside in winter” argument against December 25th, it went like this. Imagine yourself sitting at home, reading the Bible, contemplating the Christmas story. You don’t like what you see. The gifts, the money spent, Santa Claus, etc., none of it seems right to you. Yet, you are not sure why.

You have even seen arguments against December 25th as the day of the Savior’s birth. None of this sits well with you. In your mind these things can’t be right. Why. if you are bothered by this, imagine how the Savior feels.

Stop.

This is the first mistake, one that is made by many people on many issues. They equate their feelings to the level of the Lord’s feelings. If something bothers them, why would it not bother Jesus? So, without questioning the connection they just made, they continue forward with this line of thought and open a door.

What they should have done was stop, and ask the next question. “It seems like this would offend God, but He is more than me. Is it possible that I am missing something here?” If they would have went this route, the Lord would

have worked them through this, and they would be the one writing this article. However, they did not.

Rather than stopping and asking the next natural question, they moved forward with this idea – a very human idea born of a fleshly understanding. It became a premise for additional false understanding. It makes sense to them, and as such cannot be wrong. In their mind they have connected to dots on something. Such a connection cannot possibly be wrong. With this flawed premise and the door it opens, Satan comes to them very subtly. He counterfeits a revelatory process used by the Lord.

He whispers a soft “suggestion” to them.

*“Sheep are kept inside in the winter. It’s too cold to have them outdoors”.*

Satan will then give them a picture that they can focus on. He will take a very familiar scene and modify it to his purposes. In this case, Satan would use the mental image of someplace such as the mountains of Colorado in the winter. Our believer will see a scene play out in their mind that is very familiar to them and makes sense. In this case, maybe Satan shows them the Rocky mountains covered in snow. Maybe he shows them the Appalachian mountains covered in snow. Sometimes it will be an image they have seen elsewhere. Maybe their mind suddenly swings to the scene of the snowy pass in the movie “The Lord of the Rings”.

All of these examples seem silly, especially the last one. However, it is the premise behind them that must be understood. To reinforce the false concept, it must be associated with something familiar and agreeable to the target. Agreeable means that the person in question already has a level of acceptance with the image that Satan throws in their mind. They have seen the pictures of



the Rockies in winter. Perhaps they have been there in winter. They love the mountains of West Virginia in the winter.

The Lord of the Rings is a favorite movie, and they watch it often.

It does not matter what the image is. It matters only that it is familiar, accepted, and not questioned. It must be an instantaneous connection between the image and the false idea that Satan whispered.

In this case, Satan started with “Sheep are kept inside in the winter. It’s too cold to have them outdoors”, and paired it with a bitterly cold blizzard scene that played out in the mind of our deceived believer. They heard the words, then saw the snowy scene. At this point it was game over. They now had a common connection, and the premise from which EVERYTHING on this subject would now be judged. This common connection was now the baseline truth of the matter, and nothing would hold a greater importance.

Not even the Bible.

So, our believer now “knows” that the sheep and shepherds could not have been in the fields on December 25th, so this date must be a lie! Every time this subject comes up, the mental image of Colorado in winter comes up with it. Any argument which violates that image is discarded as false. What makes this worse is that they received this connection through “revelation”, which requires that everybody else MUST be wrong, and by extension, everything they believe must be wrong as well.

I stated earlier that this was a counterfeit process. Here is why. The Lord uses a similar method of revelation to overcomers. Rather, the Lord uses the actual method of revelation, and Satan copies it so that the deceived see no difference

in the process by which they got their false revelation, and the real process by which the Lord revealed truth to others.

The difference resides in the fruit. That is the proof of what has actually occurred! Here is what I mean.

In the project on overcoming, I talk about the fruit that is visible in the life of an overcomer. That is where the truth of this matter resides. When the Lord comes to you and speaks a revelation, or gives you that critical connection on a particular matter, He also gives you an understanding on how to question and prove what He had just revealed. He gives you a natural desire to challenge what you just learned. He also gives you the scriptural basis and the method with which you can prove what you have just learned.

Stated differently, if it was the Lord that gave our deceived believer the insight that “Sheep are kept inside in the winter. It’s too cold to have them outdoors”, He would have also kicked them off the couch and made them get to work proving what they just learned.

That is not what happened in the case of our deceived believer. It never is.

Rather than break down the revelation into it’s component parts and examine each one of it’s own accord, our deceived believer started looking for someone – anyone – that will believe as they now believe. They went looking for agreement on their ideas.

How many times have you run across believers that are clearly wrong on something, yet in their “studies” they have found the truth – and hit you with links to websites that are clearly nothing more than other deceived believers trying to talk their “truth” louder than everybody else? In other words, their

“studies” and “proof” amounts to nothing more than a collection of additional deceived believers all parroting the exact same lies, with no actual documentation and verifiable truth?

When the Lord gives you a revelation, He also gives you everything you need to study and confirm what you have been shown. He gives you a drive and desire to be skeptical, and that skepticism pushes you forward into the Bible.

When your revelation does not come from the Lord, it is a revelation that shuts down the confirmation process. It does so because the deceived believer now “knows” the truth of the matter, and needs no additional insight. So, rather than seek to disprove the revelation – which is what we are commanded to do – they seek to find agreement that they are right.

That’s how they end up with so many worthless websites that simply parrot what they want to hear. It is also why the vast majority of false doctrine websites rarely make any real attempt to provide outside sourcing.

In the case of December 25th, and the shepherds and sheep in the field, all our deceived believers needed to do was seek information from sources that are not involved in the discussion, and are experts on the various components of the story. However, in their mind there is no need. They have the season – winter. They have the weather – blizzard cold and snowing. They have the scriptures – the sheep and shepherds in the middle of a field with no method of warmth and shelter. They even have the Christmas carol – “on a cold winter’s night that was so deep”. What more do they need?

I am not exaggerating on that last point. Literally, you will see the lyrics of the Christmas carol quoted incidentally in these arguments.

However, what I have never seen from critics of the December 25th date is critical thinking and questioning. I mean this with genuine respect and not as an insult. Here is why. When the Lord impressed upon me that I was to tackle this subject for the first time, He also gave me an understanding of how and where to go for my research. He does this with anybody that will listen. He does this with me because I listen, and truly do not care what the search will reveal. I am not personally invested in any particular day for Christmas. I would not care if I found out that Christ was born in July. I would not care if the world as a whole decided to celebrate in July.

When I say never, I mean never. It is literally absent, to an embarrassing level. It becomes especially embarrassing when this same lack of critical thinking becomes evident in the work of “scholars”. On a personal note – if you make a point of declaring that going to college does not automatically make a person a scholar, nor does a PhD make an expert – you had better be able to make a case that far exceeds that of those same experts you just put down in order to pump yourself up.

Scholars are made by the work, study and research they do. If you want to be classified as a scholar, you had better produce the irrefutable results that back up your claims. Otherwise, you are nothing more than a hack that wants a lifetime’s worth of credit absent any of the real work such credit requires.

Wanting something for nothing – that is what brought rebellion to heaven.

In the case of the impossibility of the December 25th date, the key to answering the possibility resides in sources not typically thought of when discussing Biblical matters. Bear in mind that the argument here is not just that December 25th is impossible, but that the entire winter season is impossible. The goal has

been to establish the feast seasons as the best possibility – with an eye to finding some new prophetic connections that do not as of yet exist.

Among these sources we would need to understand the climatology for the area in question. Second, we would need to understand the grazing habits of sheep and goats for the region in question. Third, we would need to understand the shepherding practices of this region at the time in question.

As you can see, these are not typical inquiries for Biblical studies. At least not for most it seems. Yet, the only safeguard we can employ against the dangers of simplistic, one sentence soundbite answers steeped in false doctrine is to ask the obvious questions. All of the inquiries above can be answered fairly easily – once you understand that these questions require asking in the first place. They can also be answered within a few minutes from any number of reputable online sources that deal with such subjects. Universities, nation weather authorities, etc., all provide the requisite information for making any determination. Likewise, any answers found in these inquiries will give you the basis for searching the more prominent Christian academic sources, as you will then have the right questions to ask.

So, was December 25th an impossibility? Was winter in Israel out of the question? Don't worry, we are not attempting to dodge the 25th specifically. It may seem that way, but it's not. We will cover the 25th specifically, once we put the notion that "winter was not the season of the birth" out to pasture. To that point, here are several facts that you may not have known, and can easily verify through an online search.

The region in question was not Israel in general. It was the pasture lands outside of Bethlehem. This is important as the crux of the arguments against December 25th rely on an unspoken assumption that the weather present in the

mountains of northern Israel is the weather present everywhere in Israel during the winter. I wonder how many tourists to Israel are genuinely surprised when they arrive in late November, only to discover that Southern Israel is a desert, and most of Israel has a combined desert / sea climate. There is a reason why most tourists to Israel opt for a late fall, early winter trip.

Regarding the region in question, an excerpt from David J. Gibson, Bible League Quarterly, really sums up nicely the facts in the matter. Again, what you are about to read is fully and completely verifiable through extant sources.

Here is the excerpt:

Years ago, in large volumes entitled Picturesque Palestine, the much-traveled Canon H. B. Tristram (died 1906), who had made frequent visits to Palestine, wrote as follows (Vol. I, page 124):

“A little knoll of olive trees surrounding a group of ruins marks the traditional site of the angel's' appearance to the shepherds, Migdol Eder, ‘the tower of the flock’. But the place where the first ‘Gloria in excelsis’ was sung was probably further east, where the bare hills of the wilderness begin, and a large tract is claimed by the Bethlehemites as a common pasturage. Here the sheep would be too far off to be led into the town at night; and exposed to the attacks of wild beasts from the eastern ravines, where the wolf and the jackal still prowl, and where of old the yet more formidable lion and bear had their covert,*they needed the shepherds’ watchful care during the winter and spring months, when alone pasturage is to be found on these bleak uplands*”. (Italics supplied).

Here an authority of no mean standing tells us that in the dry summer season the hills are well-nigh bare, affording insufficient pasture, so the shepherds then normally keep their sheep near the town and enfold them at night. But when the

winter rains fall, the hills become clothed with grass, and the shepherds, knowing this, take their sheep further afield. Then, because it would make the sheep walk too far to reach the folds every evening, expending energy needlessly, they simply watch their flocks in the fields all night.

This seems to be precisely what the evangelist Luke describes:

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). The shepherds were not in the town; the flock was not in a fold in or near the town. They were afar in ‘the field’ or common pasturage. The sheep were taken there only in the winter, when the winter rains brought forth grass on the hills.

Another authority of the highest rank, Dr. Alfred Edersheim, who considers it likely that the angel appeared to the shepherds at the traditional site, states:

“This Migdol Eder was not the watchtower for the ordinary flocks which pastured on the barren sheep-ground beyond Bethlehem, but lay close to the town” (Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah 1:186).

He surveys (in Appendix VII) all the evidences he is aware of, and while he admits that ‘absolute certainty’ is impossible as to the exact date of the Nativity, he shows that the known ‘factors do not really conflict with the December dating. “There is no adequate reason,” he wrote, “for questioning the historical accuracy of this date. The objections generally made rest on grounds which seem to me historically untenable.”

Readers of Scripture who possess first-hand knowledge, or have acquaintance with authoritative works on the climate of Palestine, recognize that the

arguments against the December date, based upon wintry and snowy conditions, are untenable. The facts have long been known.

As far back as 1863, Smith's Bible Dictionary, under the heading 'Palestine: the Climate', explained the rarity of snow in southern Palestine, while it conceded its more frequent occurrence in the northern parts of the land. The mean temperature at Jerusalem during December is said to run around 47 to 60 degrees F.

It certainly would not hurt sheep to be out at night in that sort of temperature. The Dictionary further states:

*"As in the time of our Saviour (Luke 12: 54), the rains come chiefly from the S. or S.W. They commence at the end of October or beginning of November, and continue with greater or less constancy till the end of February or middle of March, and occasionally, though rarely, to the end of April. It is not a heavy continuous rain, so much as a succession of severe showers or storms with intervening periods of fine bright weather, permitting the grain crops to grow and ripen. And although the season is not divided by any entire cessation of rain for a lengthened interval, as some represent, yet there appears to be a diminution in the fall for a few weeks in December and January, after which it begins again, and continues during February and till the conclusion of the season."*

It may be noted that the traditional date for the birth of Christ falls in this period of the diminution of rainfall toward the end of December. The former rains would have produced grass on the hills, and the fine bright weather intervening between the rains, with temperatures averaging 55 degrees F. would be excellent for sheep grazing on the hills east of David's royal city.



Unger's Bible Dictionary, published by the Moody Press in 1959, has little to add to the foregoing. Under the heading 'Palestine:

*Climate' it speaks of the winter season, 'moist, rainy, mild, from November to April'. Under the heading 'Winter' we are told that "the cold of winter is not usually very severe, though the north winds are very penetrating from the middle of December to the middle of February. Snow and hail during most winters fall on the hills. On the central range snow has been known to reach a depth of nearly two feet, and to lie for five days or even more, and the pools at Jerusalem have some times been covered with ice. But this is rare. On the central range the ground seldom freezes, and the snow usually disappears in a day."*

When it is remembered that the foregoing is a general description for the whole land of Palestine, the northerly highlands included, which are cooler than the Bethlehem region, it is not difficult to believe, as a missionary who had lived east of the Jordan for a number of years, told the writer, that one might see shepherds out with sheep at night any month of the year; they go where there is pasture. And it is clear that it is only during the winter that pasture is to be found on the hills east of Bethlehem. ~~~

That should just about finish off the whole "Sheep are kept inside in the winter. It's too cold to have them outdoors" argument. How many of you have never heard this explained before? How many have heard only that the sheep could not be out in the winter?

How many of you have never heard that it is not just sheep, but goats as well?

Does this shock you? Many of you would have to answer "yes". However, simple research beyond the camps attempting to argue against December 25th

would have revealed this very quickly. Why is this important? Simple. It illustrates what gets missed when we don't actually study beyond the words of those that think as we do.

This brings up another consideration. The argument against December 25th always leads to the same declaration – that December 25th was originally a pagan holiday that was converted to a Christian holiday by Rome. We will deal with the implications of the pagan aspects in a moment. That said, there is something that needs understood. Satan is not a creator. He cannot create anything from scratch. He is a counterfeiter.

What this means is that anything that is attributed to paganism will ultimately have it's origin in something of the Lord. Look at the things that paganism claims. Look at the things that false doctrine claims. In these you will find the truth. You will find that what is presented is nothing more than a counterfeit.

This tells us that December 25th is a strong contender for the physical birth. We know this as paganism and false doctrine both try to claim this day. The false doctrine aspect is particularly telling.

Without exception, every single argument I have seen against celebrating Christmas on December 25th has been used to justify a return to the Law, and placing the grace of the cross under man made righteousness.

Never forget this. If somebody espouses a doctrine that ultimately leads back to denying the soon return of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – that doctrine is false!

A few minutes ago I said that we would deal specifically with the date of the 25th, and some of the reasons given against it as the day that Christ was born.

Everything I am going to share here can also be confirmed through your own research. As I said earlier, when you get away from the websites that make the argument against the 25th, and away from the arguments THEY want you to fight, acquiring the truth becomes considerably easier to do. Here are a couple quick points, and the actual answers that the critics of Christmas don't want you to know:

Point one – December 25th was chosen as it was the pagan celebration of Saturnalia. Rome switched this pagan day for Christmas in order to keep it's pagan celebration under the new state religion.

Truth – Saturnalia celebrates the winter solstice, which falls on December 22nd. It would be celebrated as a festival over time, with the holiday starting as early as the 17th, running as late as the 23rd.

That would be “no dice” on this particular myth.

Point two – December 25th was chosen because of “sol invictus” – the celebration of the “unconquered sun”.

Truth – Taylor Marshall gives a solid examination of this point:

“Let us examine first the cult of the Unconquered Sun. The Emperor Aurelian introduced the cult of the Sol Invictus or Unconquered Sun to Rome in A.D. 274. Aurelian found political traction with this cult, because his own name Aurelian derives from the Latin word aurora denoting “sunrise.” Coins reveal that Emperor Aurelian called himself the Pontifex Solis or Pontiff of the Sun. Thus, Aurelian simply accommodated a generic solar cult and identified his name with it at the end of the third century.

Most importantly, there is no historical record for a celebration Natalis Sol Invictus on December 25 prior to A.D. 354. Within an illuminated manuscript for the year A.D. 354, there is an entry for December 25 reading “N INVICTI CM XXX.” Here N means “nativity.” INVICTI means “of the Unconquered.” CM signifies “circenses missus” or “games ordered.” The Roman numeral XXX equals thirty. Thus, the inscription means that thirty games were order for the nativity of the Unconquered for December 25th. Note that the word “sun” is not present. Moreover, the very same codex also lists “natus Christus in Betleem Iudeae” for the day of December 25. The phrase is translated as “birth of Christ in Bethlehem of Judea.”<sup>[1]</sup>

The date of December 25th only became the “Birthday of the Unconquered Sun” under the Emperor Julian the Apostate. Julian the Apostate had been a Christian but who had apostatized and returned to Roman paganism. History reveals that it was the hateful former Christian Emperor that erected a pagan holiday on December 25. Think about that for a moment. What was he trying to replace?

These historical facts reveal that the Unconquered Sun was not likely a popular deity in the Roman Empire. The Roman people did not need to be weaned off of a so-called ancient holiday. Moreover, the tradition of a December 25th celebration does not find a place on the Roman calendar until after the Christianization of Rome. The “Birthday of the Unconquered Sun” holiday was scarcely traditional and hardly popular. Saturnalia (mentioned above) was much more popular, traditional, and fun. It seems, rather, that Julian the Apostate had attempted to introduce a pagan holiday in order to replace the Christian one!

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Here are the words of several early church fathers with regards to December 25th:

*Theophilus (A.D. 115-181), Catholic bishop of Caesarea in Palestine: “We ought to celebrate the birthday of Our Lord on what day soever the 25th of December shall happen.”*

*Hippolytus (A.D. 170-240) wrote in passing that the birth of Christ occurred on December 25:*

*The First Advent of our Lord in the flesh occurred when He was born in Bethlehem, was December 25th, a Wednesday, while Augustus was in his forty-second year, which is five thousand and five hundred years from Adam. He suffered in the thirty-third year, March 25th, Friday, the eighteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, while Rufus and Roubellion were Consuls.~~*

I use these two sources specifically because of the dating involved. The arguments against December 25th rely on an assumption that the 25th was chosen specifically because that date was a pagan holiday, and that it was not chosen until somewhere between 400 AD and 700 AD – depending on the source of the argument.

There is something else that must be addressed. There are many that turn to “celebrating the birth of Christ is not in the Bible” as a defense. However, this is no defense, as the same can be said of not celebrating the birth of Christ. The next time that somebody declares that the Bible does not command us to celebrate the birth of the Savior, ask them this question – and follow it with this reasoning:

*“Then you can show me where the Bible specifically forbids celebrating the birth of Christ?*

*Surely, with 613 specific commands and declarations of what not to do, I assume you can clearly point out that the birth of Messiah is expressly forbidden in the Bible.*

*I assume that you can also point me to where the Bible says that deciding in my heart to celebrate the birth of the salvation of mankind is truly a sin.*

*After all, I would expect the Bible to specifically address the hearts of men, and the intent behind why we do the things we do.*

*Besides, it's not like the Bible requires that we go forth and spread the Gospel, or that the birth of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not found in the Gospel.*

*Luke 2:10-14 KJV – And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

*And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*

*And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,*

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*

*Mark 16:15 KJV – And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

*Matthew 28:19 KJV – Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

*Matthew 24:14 KJV – And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*

*Surely, you can show me where the virgin birth of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ – you know, the event that was used to allow God to come into the world as a perfect, sinless man – is not relevant, nor worth celebrating. Never mind that it has become a day where many come to understand the Gospel for the very first time.*

*You can show me these things in the Bible, and not your personal interpretation?”*

However, there is an even more obvious point that requires stating, even though it should be, well, obvious.

Given that the disciples and early apostles knew who Jesus was, and how He was born of a virgin, is it really possible that Mary somehow forgot when Jesus was born? Is it really possible that those who knew Jesus personally would not be interested in hearing the story first hand, from the lips of the very Mary that gave birth to the Savior?

Do you really imagine that that first year after the death and resurrection saw no commemoration WHATSOEVER of the birth of the Savior? Not even from

Mary, His mother? Would you forget your child that easily? I understand that the Bible does not record this. However, it is no less a pertinent question.

Here is another question for you. How do Jews view birthdays? This is one of the great arguments levied by critics of Christmas. You will get a commentary of the birthday of Pharaoh, as well as several other recitals which prove that only pagans commemorate the day of the birth, and as such, orthodox Jews would have done no such thing!

Well, this is where we need reminded that upon the receiving of the Holy Spirit, the Disciples were no longer orthodox Jews. They were disciples of Christ. They lived and served under a new covenant. The Apostle Paul spends a great deal of time expounding on this in his letters.

However, for those that jump into a blind assumption that the Jews in the first century did not count or commemorate the day of the birth (much the same way that critics never see the weather in Israel as anything other than blizzard conditions year round), I would offer you this.

Without the keeping of a birthday count, you cannot know when the third or fifth birthday hits, or when it is time for the bar mitzvah! Yet, this simple observation is foreign to many people it seems.

Recall the quotes from the earlier church fathers that we addressed a moment ago:

Theophilus (A.D. 115-181), Catholic bishop of Caesarea in Palestine: "We ought to celebrate the birthday of Our Lord on what day soever the 25th of December shall happen."



Hippolytus (A.D. 170-240) wrote in passing that the birth of Christ occurred on December 25:

The First Advent of our Lord in the flesh occurred when He was born in Bethlehem, was December 25th, a Wednesday, while Augustus was in his forty-second year, which is five thousand and five hundred years from Adam. He suffered in the thirty-third year, March 25th, Friday, the eighteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, while Rufus and Roubellion were Consuls.

With that, let's take a look at the original article that the Lord gave me on the subject of Christmas and Easter:

It seems that in the last couple of years, there has been an effort to stop Christians from celebrating Easter and Christmas. We have all seen the posts that get shared. They will list the various pagan origins behind each of the two holidays, and usually present questions as to whether or not God would be pleased with us for doing so.

This Easter, it seems that this has turned up a quite a bit. Since Easter is the season before us, let's examine the reasons behind the celebration, and we will tie this into Christmas as well.

There are two primary groups of believers that share these posts. The first group seems to have a genuine interest in getting the word out. They share the posts, yet they do not condemn.

The second group, however, takes the issue just a bit further.

Can we as believers celebrate these holidays? Or do we face the judgment of God for doing so? Let's look at this issue from the standpoint of Easter since this is where we find ourselves now. Likewise, much of what we are going to

cover is applicable to Christmas also. You will understand the differences as well.

Before we get into the heart of this, we need to address the first group for just a moment. Many of you share these posts, and you have made personal decisions not to engage in the traditions of Easter. You have forgone the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs, and your celebration is the resurrection alone. You have discarded the Christmas tree as well. When you speak of the origins of holiday's, you do so with a whole heart. Your intentions are true, and you trust the Lord to work with each believer according to his will for their life.

In this vein, your heart makes your decision pleasing to God. As we will see a bit later, scripture tells us that the heart is where our worship rests. It is the heart that sins, and the heart that seeks the Lord. The acceptable sacrifice before the Lord resides not in the turning from a once pagan holiday – rather, it resides in the decision to do something to honor the Lord – with no expectation of praise.

Those of you that have given up the Easter celebration and Christmas under these auspices have done so with a pure heart. You have not sought to enslave others to your own wisdom and law.

The things in this article do not pertain to you.

*Romans 8:27-28 – And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

First, let's have a common sense conversation. Before we get into the scriptural case for what we are discussing, let me ask you something:

Is the Easter Bunny more powerful than our God? Yes, this is a serious question. Does our God have no power over Easter eggs? What about Santa Claus and the Christmas tree? Here is why I ask.

In the more aggressive efforts to stamp out what has literally been described as an offense so egregious to God, we are told that the celebrations of Easter and Christmas is sure to bring his most dire judgments. I have seen believers literally describe the celebration of these days as an offense on par – and far greater – with those committed in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Is it? Sodom and Gomorrah were annihilated for their offenses. What about other judgments of God?

Egypt fell to ten plagues, including the death of the first born of both man and beast.

Herod was killed by God for murdering young children to get to Jesus.

Israel was carried into captivity for her sins.

The Temple itself was destroyed twice for the sins of Israel.

In 70 AD, the Roman Tenth Legion was sent to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, with 6,000 dying on the Temple Mount.

The people on the plains of Shinar were struck with different tongues and separated for their willful disobedience to the Lord.

The Lord took the son of King David – a man after his own heart – for his adultery with Bathsheba.

Cain was marked and set to wander for killing Abel.

Samson was struck with blindness, weakness and chains for falling to the wiles of Delilah.

Israel was broken into two nations for her rebellion.

Israel wandered for 40 years for their disbelief.

Thousands of Hebrews perished when Moses came down from Mount Sinai to the golden calf.

Many Canaanite kingdoms fell before Israel as they marched into the Promised Land.

This is but a sample of the many times the Lord has exercised his power as the Living God. Not to be left out, there is a time of Jacob's trouble coming on Israel for their unbelief. It is described as a time of trouble that has not been since the foundations of the world, nor shall ever be.

So, I ask again – is the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus more powerful than our God? Here is why I ask.

With all of these examples of the judgment of God, and the many more we have not even touched on – including those that strike individuals for disobeying God – the Easter Bunny has walked through nearly 4,000 years of history untouched

by our God. Nearly 2,000 years of that has been spent disguised as a Christian holiday.

So, here is the question – if the Lord has been so quick to strike down everything else that is truly an affront to him, why have Peter Cottontail and Rudolph gotten off the hook?

Look at our own nation. Look at how we have started to slide. We can track the decline of our nation literally to events such as the legalization of abortion and the removal of the Ten Commandments. We can see the entire western world literally slide into increasing judgments of God as homosexuality has gained the upper hand and sexual sin abounds. Offenses for which the Lord wiped several nations off the face of the earth.

Yet, the greatest of all offenses – the Easter Bunny – continues to march through history, thumbing his nose at the one true living God – and he gets away with it!

Never mind that upstart false saint Santa Claus.

If Peter Cotton tail and Santa are the direct abominations to God that some say they are, then why has God allowed them to stand unchallenged longer than any other abomination? Clearly, the Lord has some power as he has brought judgment on every other thing that offends him.

He even wiped out the entire earth in a flood to end evil and abominations.

Never mind that the flood was the end of the fathers, and the fathers of the fathers of the Easter Bunny, and the fathers of the Christmas tree. With the flood, the Lord wiped out the giants – the mighty men of renown – and put their fathers in chains (the “sons of God”, or the fallen angels that fathered them) in

the lower chambers of the earth. These were the direct creators of every false religion that has ever existed upon the earth.

In the last 2,000 years, the Lord supernaturally assembled the Bible, raised up his church, spread the Gospel to the four corners of the earth, brought a prosperity to the west that has never been seen upon the earth, translated the Bible into every known language, blessed the lives of individual believers, moved the march of human history according to the pages of his Holy Word, re-birthed the nation of Israel, lined up the player for end times prophecy – and yet the Easter Bunny has remained the one obstacle that our God cannot strike down? Yet, the Easter Bunny lives!

Why has the Lord not bothered with so great an abomination as Easter and Christmas? He has touched every single aspect of our lives. How many of you see the direct hand of the Lord in your lives. How many times has the Lord brought you under conviction for sin in your life? How many times has the Lord directly and undeniably chastised you for something you were getting wrong?

It has happened more times in my life than I can count.

Why do some want to discount the power of God to move in the lives of believers as he calls them to his will? Why do they seek to force believers to abandon the guidance of the Lord, and start deciding for themselves what is and is not acceptable before God. Why do they seem to have no understanding that the Lord works on us a piece at a time, in the order of things that he so determines?

It's not as though this is a new end times deception. Easter has existed for nearly 4,000 years – with nearly 2,000 of those years as a Christian Holiday. However, what is new about all of this is the sudden push to enslave other

believers, stealing their salvation if they should not fall in line with the chorus of those declaring death to any that should dare to offend God!

A God that is apparently powerless to stop the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus.

Ask these folks if you will burn in hell for celebrating Easter. Make them prove it scripturally – from the New Testament as well. Make them show you were the death of Jesus Christ was not sufficient for all sins – especially the celebration of Easter and Christmas. Make them prove that Christ could not overcome the power of the Easter Bunny and Christmas tree.

While we are on this subject – let me ask you another question. How many times have you seen the Lord strike down devout, spirit filled believers for celebrating Easter and Christmas? I'm not talking about your average, run of the mill believer. I'm talking mighty men and women of God, clearly filled with the spirit of God. Come to think of it, how is it even possible to be filled with the spirit of God while falling into such an abomination? You know the believers I am talking about. Your heart is filled with joy at their mere presence. You can clearly see the blessing of the Lord on their lives in all that they do. How many of us know believers for which there can be no doubt of their relationship with God – yet they practice the damnable heresy of Easter and Christmas?

How many of you enjoy an active and vibrant life with the Lord, yet celebrate this greatest of all abominations? Why has the Lord not struck you down yet? There are some that will declare your eminent downfall. Yet, just how many have actually ever fallen because of Easter and Christmas? How many do we know that dare to utter the word "Easter" – yet they clearly have the Lord and his blessing in their lives? Maybe this is the year that uttering that damnable heresy "Merry Christmas" will finally bring the wrath of God.

Let me ask you this – what evidence is there that the Lord is active in the lives of those that proclaim death, doom and destruction upon all the damnable heretics that fall into the deception of Easter and Christmas? When you read their words, is there any hope in Christ? Is there any joy? Is there any peace of the Lord? Would you ask these folks about the meaning of joy unspeakable and full of glory?

Or have they slipped from your top ten list of folks to seek for the move of the spirit of God in the lives of believers? For that matter, when was the last time you can recall seeing evidence whatsoever of the Lord in their lives – aside from them informing you of this. We all know truly spirit filled believers – the fruits of the Holy Spirit are obvious without anybody ever pointing them out. When was the last time you ever saw anything that resembled a victory of the Lord in their lives?

Or do they serve a false god?

Here is what I mean. Do they serve a god with no power to stand up and strike such abominations? Is the god they serve simply relegated to the corner – bitter and angry over something they have no power to stop? Does the god they serve have no choice but to wait until the tribulation, then force his followers to be purged and punished for not listening? Is revenge all their god is capable of?

Have these people taken power from the one true God, and given it to the pagan gods of old?

Here is the danger in their view of God – it changes the nature of who God actually is. It builds a false picture of a God that has no power over false gods. When your perception of God is altered to the point that he is powerless, you effectively have a false god. When you claim that your “god” finds Easter to be



an affront and abomination of the highest order – yet he can do nothing (over 2,000 years) but wait until the tribulation to exact revenge on the only creatures he has power over now. . .

You take from the one, true living God his power and attributes. You leave him diminished and unable to strike a 4,000 year old abomination. You hand that power to a pagan god that Christ destroyed on the cross. Yes, it clearly – and without question – spells this out exactly in the Bible. The Apostle Paul covered this in great detail. We will cover this a little later in the article.

When you diminish God the Father, you diminish God the Son. If you relegate Jesus Christ to the station of vengeful master that has no power over pagan gods, you effectively replace the Lord of Glory in your life with a false Christ that does not exist. That is open idolatry. Once you start to worship this false Christ, there is no longer salvation of sins for you. Only the real Christ can bring the forgiveness of sins.

That is why there is such a push to bind believers in such a legalistic slavery. The more believers that fall into this deception, the more believers that find their salvation falling away. As we will show later – this is also directly tied to the soon return of the Lord and those that will be accounted worthy. This form of legalism goes hand and hand with denying the promise of the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read “The Final Warning” if you doubt that believers can surrender their salvation. You will find it in the tabs to the left hand side of this page.

*From 1 Timothy, chapter 1:*

*Warning Against False Teachers*

*3 As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, 4 nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations rather than the stewardship[a] from God that is by faith. 5 The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6 Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.*

Likewise, that is why these folks never bear any evidence of the move of God in their lives. Simply stated – he’s not there. There is only a vengeful spirit of self-righteousness, which is quick to condemn any believer that should dare to speak against their “doctrine”. This also is covered in irrefutable terms in the Bible. We shall likewise show this as well.

If you watch their words, and pay close attention to what they present, you will find that these “lawgivers” wallow in their own self-righteousness. It literally becomes their identity. It is all that they have. As believers, we are called to speak against those thing that are wrong. We are called to speak against sin. However, there is more to salvation than the practice of Easter and Christmas. There is the mercy of God. There is the power of God to overcome anything. There is faith in the Lord to stand upon his promises. There are fruits of the spirit that add a joy to life and an undeniable joy to living it.

Yet, these lawgivers become a broken record, always replaying the same song.

“Either you bow to what I say and become righteous like me, or the plagues of God shall fall upon you! For I hath declared it!”

Never do they speak to any detail of mercy. They will mention the forgiveness of sins from time to time, but there is no life in their words. No, the only life they display is the pronouncement of death, doom and destruction that shall come if you should dare to defy them! Yes, I said “them”. It’s clear that God himself is not quite so concerned with the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. We will show this scripturally in a bit. For our lawgivers, they desire to see capitulation to them – not to the Holy Spirit. They want the declaration of surrender upon the field of battle.

There is a reason the lawgiver is so quick to deny that the heart is the source for relationship to God. It is the reason that they refuse to acknowledge that your heart is at the center of this very question. If it is your heart that keeps you from guilt in this matter – then it is their hearts that judge them guilty in the same manner. It is their hearts that show the true station of their salvation.

*From Hebrews, chapter 3:*

*12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.*

*See now, that the heart is indeed central to who a man is, and by his heart he is forgiven or condemned:*

*From Acts, chapter 8:*

*18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me this power also,*

*so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.*

*From Romans, chapter 10:*

*The Message of Salvation to All*

*5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

*From Romans, chapter 6:*

*14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves*

*to anyone as obedient slaves,[c] you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.*

Now, everything that the lawgivers present seems very sound. After all, the origins of Easter were pagan (the symbolism of the Christmas tree is pagan as well). It was a Romanized holiday that was used to adjust a pagan populace to the new Christian doctrines. Given its origins, how could it not be offensive to God? It even makes sense to our minds. It even had me doubting God himself every time I asked about this. The Lord would answer, but this still sounded so powerful. I mean, how could God not be offended? Surely, the words of the lawgivers are sound.

I know of one such lawgiver that has recently remarked that it matters not what excuse a believer makes, for these things are still an affront to God. However, in the minds of men are the words of God made small. His implication is that we cannot change the understanding of God. It is ironic – it is the lawgiver that seeks to supplant the understanding with their own. Strangely enough, it is an understanding that just happens to place them far above all other believers. It is an understanding that deposits the knowledge of God firmly in their hands alone.

Question – when you see these things floating around that declare the absolute abomination of celebrating Easter (and Christmas for that matter) – how many have laid out the case in scripture? I mean an actual doctrinal case, with

multiple scriptures – including the New Testament. How many of these posts show where Christ himself dealt with this very thing?

There is a reason that none of them do. You will get one from time to time with an Old Testament scripture (or two) concerning eating foods sacrificed to idols, or Israel turning its back on the Lord, but that is it – and even these are rare. Indeed, there are any number of scriptures that show Israel falling into idolatry, eating things sacrificed to idols, and declaring the worship the abomination of false gods in the Law of Moses. Yet, everything I just mentioned – and every single Old Testament scripture I have seen used to defend the lawgiver position – has a direct answer in the New Testament. Every last one has been answered in light of the cross of Christ.

The position that Easter eggs are food sacrificed to idols is a particular favorite amongst the lawgivers. Similarly, Easter and Christmas dinner falls into the same vein.

We can put this argument to rest right now:

*1 Cor. 10:27-31 KJV – If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.*

*But if any man say unto you, this is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof:*

*Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?*

*For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?*

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*

The Apostle Paul delves into this subject further, revealing the reasoning for such a tactic:

*1 Timothy 4:1-4 KJV – Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;*

*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

*Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

*For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:*

*For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.*

“This should be obvious, so why do we even need scripture?” How many have died under the same logic?

That said, this was something I took to the Lord on a number of different occasions. Each time I would ask about celebrating Christmas (Easter is in the

same boat), and the Lord would reassure me that it is the heart that determines the truth of these days.

The last time I asked about this, I kid you not – the Lord literally, with a direct voice stated – and I quote – “I have to tell you this again?”

It was a voice akin to one with slight aggravation. The rub is that for some reason I just could not seem to get past this. Especially given that I was not new to hearing his voice and trusting his answers.

The next day, while I was involved in something else, he literally guided my fingers in the Bible to the scriptures that deal with this. As my eyes glanced down, his voice echoed in my head “here is your answer”.

Sure enough, it was. We will share that scripture in a bit so you can settle this once and for all in your hearts.

Paul dealt with this same issue – both from the pagan and Hebrew side. In the churches with a strong Jewish influence, there were many efforts to combine the faith with Judaism. Where paganism was strong the same thing occurred. Finally, after several of the letters dealing with various aspects of this, he finally wraps this up and puts it to bed.

There is something else that needs to be addressed in all of this. When the lawgivers speak of the origins of Easter and Christmas, it always stems from the same premise – that the pagan gods of old declared certain days and certain things as their own. As such, because these belong to pagan gods, they can never belong to the Lord. There is just one small problem with their logic:



Before any pagan god ever chose any day to celebrate anything, was it not God himself that made the days and nights in the first place? Where they not his in the first place?

Was it not God himself that declared the days from the foundation of the earth? Did not God himself form the rabbit from his very words? Is not everything defiled from sin – including us? Does this sin not already carry the penalty of death?

In truth, is not all of creation defiled in all that it does? Yet the Lord God still looks upon all these things and loved them. He loved us, and the things of creation so much that he sent his only begotten Son to die for all of creation – not just us.

It was not just humanity and the earth that fell into corruption from sin. It was all of creation, right up to the very throne of God. Even heaven itself has witnessed the defiling of sin. There is NOTHING which did not contain the abomination of sin on it. An Easter egg does not make one “more the sinner”. The Easter egg does not bring “the greater death”, for all death is death.

Let’s examine Easter in a closer light, and see why there is such a push to declare it’s celebration as an abomination.

On that Easter Sunday, Christ redeemed the whole of creation back to God – including the very Temple of God himself.

There is a reason why he could not rise on any other day of the week – save one:

It was written into the Torah long before Christ ever came to earth as a man.

If you are reading this, then you most likely have an idea of what happened on the day the Passover meal is prepared. On that day, the 14<sup>th</sup> of the month, Jesus Christ was captured, tried and crucified on the cross. He was nailed to the cross and died at the same hour the Passover Lamb was slain in the Temple. The blood of his body, from the crown of thorns on his head and the nails that pierced his hands, were set upon the cross in the place of the blood on the two doorposts and lintel.

The death of Jesus occurred at approximately 3:00PM. At the moment of his death, the veil in the Temple was torn in two. This was the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple. It was the veil that separated man from God. Upon the death of Jesus the veil was no longer required. There would be no more separation of God from men.

From the cross, Jesus was taken by Joseph of Arimethia to a freshly hewn tomb, wherein no man had laid before. Jesus was placed in the tomb, dressed only in a loin cloth. Then, he was wrapped in the burial linens and the burial napkin for his head. This was the custom for burying the Jews. Once this was complete, the two Mary's and Joseph departed the tomb and stood witness that Jesus was indeed sealed inside. Upon completion, they departed the tomb for the observance of the Passover Seder, or meal.

This is the part of the story that most are familiar with. It is what happened after the tomb was sealed that sets the stage for all eternity.

The process to secure Jesus in the tomb had to be completed before the start of the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Likewise, it must be complete in enough time for the three witnesses to return to the place wherein they would celebrate the Passover. They could not be found in violation of the law, lest their testimony regarding Jesus sealed in the tomb be made of no effect. This puts

Jesus in the sealed tomb most likely at about 7:00 PM – several hours before the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> – the first day of Unleavened Bread.

At this point we must address something. Jesus is the fulfillment of the seven major feasts of Israel. There is a reason that Passover is the first of these seven feasts. The process to fulfill each feast is specific.

On the day that the Passover lamb is slain, Jesus Christ became the last and final blood sacrifice. Once and for all, every sin offering and blood sacrifice required in the Law of Moses as fulfilled. Here is what that means. From Passover forward, there would be no more blood sacrifices required. They were all done at the cross. That would include the sacrifices of bulls and goats as well. However, there are still other requirements for each of the feast days that would likewise be fulfilled.

On Passover, the requirements of the meal, such as the hyssop and bitter herbs were fulfilled during the process of the actual crucifixion.

The next day – the first day of Unleavened Bread required a food offering to the Lord. This was done with the unleavened bread. Likewise, the unleavened bread was wrapped in linen and hidden away. As Jesus was the perfect unleavened bread, he likewise fulfilled the seven days of the eating of the unleavened bread when he was wrapped in linen and hidden in the heart of the earth. He would complete this fulfillment when he was “found” at the end of the seven days of Unleavened Bread.

Now we come to the heart of the matter – the resurrection. The resurrection of the Lord occurred in the first day of the week, the day after the weekly Sabbath.

This was the Feast of First Fruits. Now, there is something that we must address here.

When you look at a modern Jewish calendar, you will see that First Fruits begins on the second day of Unleavened Bread, and likewise the counting of the omer. However, there have long been disputes about this in rabbinical circles. Here is the text of the Torah with regards to when the Feast of First Fruits was to occur:

Leviticus 23:9-14 – And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 10 “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest, 11 and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, so that you may be accepted. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.

12 And on the day when you wave the sheaf, you shall offer a male lamb a year old without blemish as a burnt offering to the Lord. 13 And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin.

14 And you shall eat neither bread nor grain parched or fresh until this same day, until you have brought the offering of your God: it is a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

There are additional scriptures that likewise establish the 49 days of the counting of the omer. These are established in the law regarding the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost.

According to the Law of Moses, the feast was to be the day after the Sabbath. The question becomes “which Sabbath”, to which modern Judaism ascribes that this means the annual Sabbath, or the Sabbath of the Passover. That is currently what we see displayed on the Jewish calendar. However, this presents a problem.

When you go back to the original Hebrew text, the word Sabbath here is “Sabbat”, which literally means “7<sup>th</sup> day of the week, with an emphasis on worship”. Likewise, The Feast of Unleavened Bread, First Fruits and the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) are not declared in the Law of Moses as Sabbath days. They are declared days where no work (laborious work in the original Hebrew) is to be done, but not as a Sabbath. This is further evidenced by the declaring of the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, or “Sabbat” in the same chapter of Leviticus – which shows that the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath is clearly understood and not forgotten. Likewise, when we get to the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles, we see that these feast days are specifically declared either a Sabbath (Sabbat), or they are declared a “Sabbath Rest” – or Sabbaton – which is Sabbat by extension. So, this leaves a question – how was Unleavened Bread determined to be the Sabbath by which the Feast of First Fruits was to follow?

As it is even in our day, mankind has a habit of redefining the law as the year’s progress. So it was by the time Jesus was born. Given that the Sabbath and the High Holy Days both required a period of rest to celebrate, the “Sabbath Rest”, or Sabbaton came into existence. Now, this does make sense to a degree. After all, the Feast Days are the Holiest days of the year, worthy of a yearly – or annual – Sabbath status. However, this would lead to the difficulties in determining the proper date for the celebration of First Fruits. This was a problem that was further complicated by the Greek writing of the New Testament. By the time the Gospels were written, there was one word in the

Greek for Sabbath – sabbaton (pronounced the same as the Hebrew word sabbaton). However, in the Greek, Sabbaton is used for the weekly Sabbath, the annual Sabbath, the Sabbath rest and the Sabbath days. It requires the context of the passage to determine which version of Sabbaton we are looking at.

Now, you should understand something. Everything I just shared here really bothered me. Here is why. I am a great respecter of academic knowledge, and for those that dedicate their lives to their given professions. The same holds true of the rabbinical scholars that have determined that the Sabbath day which starts the Feast of First Fruits is in fact the high day of Unleavened Bread – just one day after the Passover lamb is slain, or the second day of Unleavened Bread. Understand, that when I began my own research, I could clearly see – with no difficulty – that the Sabbath day written in the Law of Moses for setting the Feast of First Fruits was in fact the Sabbat, or the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath. I will be honest- this grieved me. How could genuine Rabbinical Scholars miss what I could clearly see? Likewise, what many Christian scholars could also clearly see (along with many Messianic Rabbinical scholars)?

Then the Lord impressed something upon my heart very clearly:

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 – But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away.

On a side note, we see yet one more time that the heart is the key piece of your worship of God.

The Apostle Paul tells us that the Jews have been blinded. There are several other scriptures that confirm this as well. Though many rabbinical scholars are well meaning in their research, they are nevertheless operating at a disadvantage. Then something else I had discovered made sense. During my research on this, I found where the disputes over the meaning of Sabbath stemmed from modern Jewish scholars declaring corruption of the Pharisees, and that it was their corrupt interpretation that declared the Sabbath in the Feast of First Fruits as the weekly Sabbath, not the first day of Unleavened Bread. This corruption is given as the reason why modern Judaism accepts the Passover Sabbath as the Sabbath that sets the timing of First Fruits, and not the weekly Sabbath.

All of this made sense now. If the Feast of First Fruits is acknowledged by modern Judaism as beginning the day after the 7<sup>th</sup> day Sabbath, then it has no choice but acknowledge what I am going to share with you. Understand, there are ultra-orthodox Jewish Rabbis that spend the bulk of their scholarship in an effort to deny that Jesus Christ is the Messiah. As such, there can be no connection to the events of his death and resurrection and the fulfilling of prophecy and the feasts.

**Mark 16:9 – Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.**

When rabbinical scholars research the claims of Jesus and Messiah, there are a few things from the text of the four Gospels that would stick out to them, which many Christians will miss. It is in these details that we find the proof the Jesus was the Messiah, and why the celebration of the Sunday after Passover is a far more necessary celebration than we realize. Indeed, it is what happened that Sunday that sets the stage for all eternity.

John 20:14-17 – And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. ~

I have seen any number of commentaries which speak to the meaning of “touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father”. Most expound on an allegorical meaning, saying this speaks to Mary not being able to let Jesus go. However, with careful examination of the scripture, we see a few things which put this passage in a whole new light – and prove the divinity of Jesus Christ.

We see in verse 14 that Mary did not recognize Jesus. Furthermore, we can see that she mistook him for the gardener. Have you ever wondered why the gardener? Why not somebody else? Did Jesus look like the gardener of the garden where the tomb was found? Would Mary have known this gardener?

Here is a critical question to what happened on the resurrection morning. Was Jesus naked? Remember, he was wrapped in burial linens and the burial napkin. He would have had only a loin cloth on him. The burial linens were still folded in the tomb. So the question remains – what would Jesus have worn? As a Jew and a perfect human being he would not have run around nearly naked.

Now, given that Mary entered the tomb and found two angels sitting there, it is no stretch of the imagination to declare that the angels provided clothing to



Jesus. By this time, such a thing would hardly seem a miracle, and more of a given.

Now, the question remains – why did Mary mistake Jesus for the gardener? Jesus had only been from her sight for three days and nights.



Today, as it was in the days of Jesus, gardeners dress much as they always have. Given the climate, heat and arid conditions, their choice of attire is less “choice” and more of a necessity. There would have been four garments worn by the gardener – a linen coat, linen pants, linen belt and a linen headdress. Sometimes these would have been white garments, sometime other light colors. The linen would be a cotton linen, designed to protect them from long hours in the sun and the Mediterranean climate.

You may recall earlier that we spoke of Jesus fulfilling the seven feast of Israel. So far, he has fulfilled all of the blood sacrifices for the seven feasts, and he fulfilled the food offering of unleavened bread when he was wrapped in the burial linens and hidden away for three days and three nights. Now, this leaves the Feast of First Fruits to be fulfilled. The blood sacrifices have been satisfied. However, there remains three aspects of First Fruits left to be accomplished.

These would be the First Fruits of the barley harvest for the Priesthood and Israel, the first day of the First Fruits offering for the congregation closest to Jerusalem, followed by the remaining 48 days were the rest of the congregation of Israel makes their way to Jerusalem and offers the First Fruits of their barley harvests.

Remember when Jesus told Mary to “touch me not”? Has it ever occurred to you that the language here is very specific? Likewise, short of some allegorical meaning that only partially fits the language, Jesus was indeed touched before the ascension 40 days after he arose. Why is that?

Did you know that on the Day of Atonement, before the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies for the one time that year to sprinkle the blood on the Ark of the Covenant and complete the incense offering, they cannot be touched as they are ritually clean? On the night before the Day of Atonement and the morning of, the High Priest would complete a process to finish purifying himself and dress in the outfit required for the ritual of Atonement. Once complete and dressed, the High Priest could not be touched until after he emerged from the Holy of Holies.

When the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies, he would not be wearing the breastplate, headdress, ephod or colored belt. His uniform – for this task alone – was the basic uniform of the regular priest:

A white linen coat, a white linen belt, white linen pants and a white linen headdress.



The exact same uniform Mary saw Jesus wearing that morning at the tomb. The same outfit she would have expected to see the gardener wearing. The same uniform of the High Priest that is getting ready to enter the Holy Chamber of God. The same uniform that the angels brought the night before, when the Sabbath ended and the first day of the week began. The same uniform that Jesus ritually dressed in after he rose in the hour just past the start of the Feast of First Fruits, which started about 9:00PM on Saturday night. The same uniform alone that could be worn in order for Jesus to enter the Holy Chamber of the Heavenly Temple to cleanse the furniture. The same uniform required for him to sprinkle the blood first, so that the wave offering for the royal priesthood of heaven could be offered – a wave offering that could not be presented until the heavenly Temple was cleansed.

A heavenly Temple that was defiled with sin when Lucifer rebelled against God, and took one third of the angels with him. A rebellion that was likewise witnessed by the remaining two thirds of the angels. They had been innocent

until this point. After original sin that innocence was gone. Sin had manifested before the Throne of God himself. Indeed, all of creation had now fallen. Indeed, all of creation would now need redeemed back to God.

It was this same sin that manifested itself when angels came to earth to teach the righteousness of God to men, and found the daughters of men to be desirable. It was this same sin that brought the birth of the giants. It was the death of these giants which gave us the evil spirits – the spirits of dead giants, half man and half angel – that would roam the earth and birth every false and vile religion. It was this same sin the Jesus Christ would ascend to heaven on the Feast of First Fruits – enter the Holy Chamber of the Temple of God – and sprinkle his blood upon the furniture to cleanse and purify heaven itself from all uncleanness.

You may be making the connection as to why the Easter Bunny is not quite the abomination that many make him out to be. Likewise, those familiar with the attempts of Satan to pervert the things of God will doubtless recognize the irony in using the Easter Bunny to trap believers.

Only then, with the Temple cleansed, could the offering of the First Fruits of the barley harvest be presented before God. We saw this with the Old Testament Saints that rose from the dead and were seen in Jerusalem. They were the First Fruits of Israel that were offered by the priests – after they presented their own First Fruits offering.

That first offering – offered by the hand of the High Priest himself in Israel – is the offering fulfilled by Jesus Christ himself.

It was the Old Testament Saints that were presented before the cleansed Holy Temple of God that fulfilled the First Fruits of the barley harvest for Israel and

the people. They were the second of the two wave offerings that would be required on the Feast of First Fruits, the first of the 49 total days of barley.

All of this had to be completed on the Feast of First Fruits, that this Holy day should be fulfilled.

This leaves one final set of 48 separate First fruits offerings to be fulfilled for the completion of the remaining 48 days. The offering for the congregation and the great assembly – the Holy Convocation called by the sounding of the shofars. These would be the offerings of the people. They would occur first for those closest to the Temple of God – those closest to God – those camped outside the city walls, having already made the journey to the House of God.

The first of these final offerings has not been made yet. It will not be made until the Great Assembly of the King is called, with the blowing of both the first and last trumpets of Gold. An assembly that will be repeated seven years later.

We mentioned earlier that this ties directly to the promise of the soon return of the Lord. Now you can see the connection, and why the heart of the lawgiver cannot accept the promise of his return. This connection is further evidenced by the scriptures you will now read.

Hebrews 9:11-14, 23-28:

~ Redemption through the Blood of Christ;

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the

blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. ~

This is why, after nearly 2,000 years believers are led by a calling in our hearts to reverence the first day of the week. It is the day that the Lord Jesus Christ defeated not only sin, but every power and principality that has ever dared to challenge the will of God.

This is a process that started on Passover, yet the redemptive work would not be complete until all of creation had been purchased with the price of the blood

of Christ. On Sunday, the task would be finished. On Sunday, the plan of redemption was complete.

The question becomes whether or not the believer can celebrate Easter. Is the very mention of Easter the abomination that others claim it to be?

Or has Ishtar been defeated once and for all? Is there any power or principality that can stand against the shed blood of Christ? Has Jesus Christ taken back what Satan attempted to steal from the hand of God in the first place?

The following scriptures close the case on this question forever. They answer every Old Testament scripture that lawgivers use to justify their claims. They do not discard those scriptures – they fulfill them. Likewise, they are the completion of the several New Testament scriptures where Paul dealt with this same issue piece by piece. Can the believer celebrate Easter? Can we celebrate the resurrection Sunday – even over the celebration of the Passover?

Can we celebrate Christmas as well?

Consider the words of the Apostle Paul on this very matter. These are the scriptures that I mentioned earlier – these were the direct answer from the Lord when I asked of him these very same questions:

Colossians 2:6-23 ~

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

*See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.*

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.

*This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*

*He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.*

*Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.*

*These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.



*If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings?*

*These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. ~*

Why can we now celebrate Easter, Christmas – or any other day to the glory of Christ – no matter which false god has attempted to set their name upon the day?

*“This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”*

That is a power that can only come from a risen Savior.

The next time someone tries to steal your salvation and joy, condemning you to hell for such a thing – remember this:

*“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.”*

What we have covered thus far closes the issue. However, Satan always seeks to ensnare, and always offers a “new” line of reasoning to trap the wayward believer. To that end, the Apostle Paul offers an abundant amount of guidance on this subject. Remember, the attacks on Christmas and Easter may have ratcheted up in recent years, but they stem from a long line of tactics and efforts which have existed from the first days of the Body of Christ. Let’s look at some

of the additional scriptures and dispel some of the half-truths and outright lies offered on this subject.

Craig Bluemel wrote an excellent response to a question he received on this subject. In his response, Craig so eloquently stated that *“The apostle Paul used pagan holidays to his advantage, and instead of boycotting every pagan item in society, he found innovative and God-inspired ways to use whatever he could to share the gospel. In one passage Paul said ‘to the Jew, I became as a Jew, to the Gentile, as a Gentile... I become all things to all men in the hope that I may win some to Christ.’”*

Indeed this is the case. Paul dealt with this subject tirelessly, as it never ceased to rear its ugly head. What must be understood is the reason why this catches so many believers.

It offers “proof” that the absence of the presence of the Lord does not actually mean that THEY are the unrighteous ones.

Without exception, every example of this I stumble across originates with a believer that is literally hell bent on salvation through works. I speak at length on this in the tithing project. Works salvation stems from a need to see “proof” that the believer is “right” with God, where God Himself will not confirm this for them.

If the Lord does not speak to you, and let you know you are pleasing to Him, then it means there is a reason.

Every overcomer I know has a deep and abiding relationship with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is with them and guides them. He corrects them when they are wrong, and confirms when they are right. He gives them

revelation knowledge on the things found in the Bible, and confirms those revelations scripturally. Those confirmations come in a manner that cannot be counterfeited, and the full context of the subject, original language, and every other scripture on the subject bears out. There is visible and undeniable fruit in the lives of the overcomer.

This is also the problem for our deceived believers.

Understand, the hardest thing for our wayward believer is to see the dramatic difference between their life, and the life of an overcomer. They can see the the move of the Lord in the life of the overcomer. They see the revelation knowledge. They hear the words. They see the things that are missing in their own life.

When you see what the Lord does in the life of someone that so clearly overcomes, it becomes impossible to discount that this is missing in your life. That leaves a hard truth to face, one that so many believers simply cannot fathom possible. . .

Their opinion of their life in God clearly does not match God's opinion on them.

I can illustrate this best with an example of a gentleman I know. We can call him "Jack". I have watched him over the last couple of years. I have watched as Jack literally bounced from doctrine to doctrine, trying to find revelation knowledge. Yet, it never came.

He would talk with those that did receive such knowledge (and with others in false doctrines). He would always have a theory on things, and tried to get others to hold onto his view of the Bible. He would study and stay engaged,

waiting for the word of the Lord to come upon him, and reveal what he so desperately thought he deserved.

As each theory faded Jack would quickly embrace the next.

You see, Jack simply could not fathom that it was others who received revelation knowledge. In his mind that is why he was here. He was the one that was meant to have the answers. Yet, it was so many others that the Lord spoke to. So many that in his eyes were not worthy, ready or capable of the Lord's understanding.

It simply was not possible that Jack was not the one getting the "answers" from the Lord!

It never registered with Jack as to why this was. He never understood that the difference between himself and the others was that he wanted revelation knowledge for all the wrong reasons. He wanted it to be special. Jack wanted to be "that guy". He wanted the uniqueness of the experience. Surely he was smart enough. What was the problem?

Those that get revelation knowledge from the Lord do so not because they are special. It is precisely because they are not special.

They never seek the knowledge they get. They don't ask for it. All they desire is for the Lord to teach them as He sees fit, and for His purposes. They desire the knowledge of the Lord for the joy of knowing. They do not desire to be "the guy". They don't seek to be the one with "the answers". They never saw themselves as prophets, teachers, holy men, or any of the other titles that many are so quick to toss on themselves.

If the Lord never required them to share a single revelation they would be just fine with it.

All of this put Jack in a terrible position. It opened a door – one that Satan was happy to exploit. So, that is exactly what happened.

Jack spent these couple of years watching the Lord move in the lives of others, but not in his own life. As the Lord blessed others, Jack's life slowly unraveled. As the Lord blessed the overcomer, even through hard times, those blessings never translated to Jack's life. If this happens once or twice it can be explained away. However, after several years it becomes impossible to miss the handwriting on the wall.

This is where quiet desperation sets in. I say quiet as Jack, like so many others, will do anything to keep this under wraps. Jack became more vocal. He engage in more debates and arguments. He pushed ever harder to hide what was going on. Yet, it was becoming more and more obvious that Jack was sinking. The harder he pushed, the more the trouble would shine through.

What had happened in Jack's life is the same thing that happens in the lives of every believer that falls into this trap. As the desperation grew and the door opened, Satan stepped in and began to quietly whisper excuses to Jack. It started with something t the effect of "of course you are the righteous one. Even John the Baptist had to walk alone in the wilderness."

This is one of the most dangerous moments in the life of any believer. It is that moment where they are faced with a choice. They can learn from what they are experiencing, or they can cast aside the voice of the Holy Spirit, and embrace a new voice that justifies their failures all to happily.

Jack made the wrong choice.

This voice had effectively anointed him the second coming of John the Baptist. Incidentally, if we have any more Baptizers sent to the wilderness, it won't be much of a wilderness anymore. It seems that John REALLY gets around these days!

Soon, Jack could see why he seemed to have nothing but trouble. "Why, it's because I am undergoing tribulation for the Lord!" At this point, Jack was toast. From here on out, everything Jack encountered would now be viewed as some quest from God. It presented an even greater problem. This meant that every overcomer that served as a true and genuine example of how to live for Christ was now deceived, and serving Satan. Anything that was right before the overcomer became sin in Jack's eyes. It must be sin, as the overcomer wasn't suffering as he was.

Then came the single scriptures, taken out of context, to justify how all those revelations that Lord gave the overcomers were actually lies from Satan. This skirts dangerously close to the dire warning of Hebrews 10. However, it mattered little to Jack. He was finally hearing that "voice of God" that he always KNEW would come to him. After all, he was the smartest one in the room. He always knew this, and now God was rewarding him for it!

Soon after came the justifications as to why Jack never heard from the Lord "until now". If overcomers were deceived and listening to Satan, then ANY move of the Lord Jack had witnessed in their lives was not the Lord at all. It was Satan. That was why they seemed to have something that Jack did not. They were lost. It was Jack alone that possessed the truth of the matter.

Now Jack was ready.

From that moment forward, the “voice” that Jack had so longed to hear begin to slowly and methodically introduce a succession of “new revelations”. They were close to the lies that so many overcomers – and Jack once himself – embraced. Yet, it was always there – that singular “twist” that revealed the truth. Jack was now getting what he alone deserved. He was the vessel of the hidden revelations of God!

Finally, Jack was the special one. He was “the guy” now. He always knew this day would come, and now it was time to make sure that everybody else knew how special he was. He would set out on his journey, and HE would see to it that he spread the truth.

2,000 years of lies would now be singlehandedly corrected by him!

As I said earlier, Jack is not alone in this journey. While the details will change a bit, what we see with Jack is the perfect outline for what happens to so many. They start with a desperation at the realization that there is something different in their life, that something is lacking. They end with an embrace of some of the very worst false doctrines.

While the false doctrines they embrace run the gambit, they all share the same underlying premise. They depend on works and actions as proof of righteousness, as opposed to the faith that the Bible declares. Everything they espouse is dependent on the strength, power and works of the believer. They achieve the will of God by their own hands and efforts. It is the work they do that proves they are righteous. Anything that requires faith is of the devil to them.

It is of the devil as they do not possess the faith to stand themselves.

Anytime they are called to stand on faith they respond with excuses. They will hear nothing of it. Doctrines such as the pre-trib rapture and tithing are the greatest deceptions ever perpetrated on the Body of Christ. These folks overwhelmingly look to the coming tribulation. In their minds it is simply not possible that Christ could return before the start of the tribulation and remove the Bride.

That requires a faith they simply do not possess.

There is a nearly endless list of doctrines that they will embrace. No rapture, no tithing, no gifts of the Holy Spirit, faith is a sin, Sabbath keeping, Law Keeping, etc. – all of which require the efforts of men rather than faith in God. All of these and others require that a man must stand on his own and do it himself. Never mind that such a thing defies numerous scriptures.

With that, let's close this project with some of those additional scriptures and settle this matter once and for all. It should be long since settled by now, but the additional scripture makes the subject a lock.

Let's pick up with Craig Bluemel once again:

The apostle Paul used pagan holidays to his advantage, and instead of boycotting every pagan item in society, he found innovative and God-inspired ways to use whatever he could to share the gospel. In one passage Paul said 'to the Jew, I became as a Jew, to the Gentile, as a Gentile... I become all things to all men in the hope that I may win some to Christ.'

1 Corinthians 10:24-27 Don't think only of your own good. Think of other Christians and what is best for them. 25 Here's what you should do. You may



eat any meat that is sold in the marketplace. Don't ask whether or not it was offered to idols, and then your conscience won't be bothered. 26 For "the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." 27 *If someone who isn't a Christian asks you home for dinner, go ahead; accept the invitation if you want to. Eat whatever is offered to you and don't ask any questions about it. Your conscience should not be bothered by this.* New Living Translation

1 Corinthians 10:31-33 *Whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, you must do all for the glory of God.* 32 Don't give offense to Jews or Gentiles or the church of God. 33 That is the plan I follow, too. I try to please everyone in everything I do. I don't just do what I like or what is best for me, *but what is best for them so they may be saved.* New Living Translation

Furthermore, Paul also wrote about the celebration of new moons and various other Sabbath days and 'holy' days. His conclusion was simply that each person be fully persuaded in his or her own heart to do what is right before God. Personally, I use the Christmas holiday as an opportunity to discuss the birth of Christ with those in my family who do not believe or practice faith in God thru Jesus Christ. Below are several more New Testament scripture passages that teach the same abiding principle of liberty in Christ, and doing all things for the sake of the gospel in spiritual liberty. Let the legalist get all upset and nasty; meanwhile, just enjoy God's presence and be watchful for opportunities to serve others in Jesus' name.

Romans 14:4-6 Who are you to pass judgment on and censure another's household servant? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he shall stand and be upheld, for the Master (the Lord) is mighty to support him and make him stand. 5 *One man esteems one day as better than another, while another man esteems all days alike [sacred]. Let everyone be fully convinced (satisfied) in his own mind.* 6 He who observes the day, observes it in honor of

the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. Amplified Bible

Galatians 4:10-12 *You are trying to find favor with God by what you do or don't do on certain days or months or seasons or years.* 11 I fear for you. I am afraid that all my hard work for you was worth nothing. 12 Dear brothers and sisters, *I plead with you to live as I do in freedom from these things, for I have become like you Gentiles were — free from the law.* You did not mistreat me when I first preached to you. New Living Translation

Galatians 4:31-5:1 So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, obligated to the law. *We are children of the free woman, acceptable to God because of our faith.* 5:1 So Christ has really set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and *don't get tied up again in slavery to the law.* New Living Translation

Galatians 5:3-6 I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey all of the regulations in the whole law of Moses. 4 *For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ!* You have fallen away from God's grace. 5 But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive everything promised to us who are right with God through faith. 6 For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, it makes no difference to God whether we are circumcised or not circumcised. *What is important is faith expressing itself in love.* New Living Translation

Galatians 5:13-16 For you have been called to live in freedom — not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, *but freedom to serve one another in love.* 14 For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 *But if instead of showing love among yourselves you are always*

*biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another.*  
16 So I advise you to *live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit*. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. New Living Translation

Romans 14:13-15 Therefore *let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this — not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.*  
14 *I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.* 15 For if because of food your brother is hurt, *you are no longer walking according to love.* New American Standard Bible

1 Corinthians 9:18-24 What then is my pay? It is the satisfaction I get from preaching the Good News without expense to anyone, never demanding my rights as a preacher. 19 This means *I am not bound to obey people* just because they pay me, *yet I have become a servant of everyone so that I can bring them to Christ.* 20 *When I am with the Jews, I become one of them* so that I can *bring them to Christ*. When I am with those who follow the Jewish laws, I do the same, even though I am not subject to the law, so that I can bring them to Christ. 21 *When I am with the Gentiles who do not have the Jewish law, I fit in with them as much as I can. In this way, I gain their confidence and bring them to Christ.* But I do not discard the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. 22 When I am with those who are oppressed, I share their oppression so that I might bring them to Christ. *Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone so that I might bring them to Christ.* 23 *I do all this to spread the Good News, and in doing so I enjoy its blessings.* 24 Remember that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize. *You also must run in such a way that you will win.* New Living Translation

May the Lord bless and keep you this Christmas and Easter, and for many more to come!

In the name of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

**Every effort has been made to document each source that was reviewed, consulted and quoted in the production of Tribulation Rising. However, the research for this project extends back for more than 20 years.**

**It is simply not possible to document every source that contributed to this material.**

**The bibliographical information presented here represents our best effort to compile as many of the sources as possible. This was an effort that began in earnest once the direction for this project was made known by the Lord.**

**There are more contributors represented in this material than we have the ability to thank individually. To that end, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of the faithful scholars that have heard the voice of the Lord, and completed the task He placed before them.**

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