

October – December 2013

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The United Kingdom
will Lose Gibraltar
and the Falkland Islands

Does Christmas Celebrate
Christ's Birthday?

The Ten Commandments Reflect Love,
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Abortion and US Debt:
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FROM THE EDITOR IN CHIEF: BOB THIEL

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS REFLECT LOVE, BREAKING THEM IS EVIL



Ten Commandments, Arkansas, 1998

Are the Ten Commandments some type of horrible burden? Some seem to think so, but what does the Bible say?

This article will deal with this from a Christian perspective, beginning with the direct teachings of Jesus about them.

Jesus and the Ten Commandments

Jesus taught all of the Ten Commandments.

Notice that He tends to state or imply that keeping each shows love or that breaking any is evil (His direct words are in red).

Commandment 1 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:37). “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30).

Commandment 2 “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). “Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow...My servants to...eat things sacrificed to idols..Now to you I say...who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden” (Revelation 2:20,24).

Commandment 3 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19-20). “...blasphemy...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:22-23).

Commandment 4 “Therefore, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Matthew 12:11-12). “The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath...Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?” (Luke 6:5,9). “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’...And they could not answer Him regarding these things” (Luke 14:3,6). “are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?” (John 7:23).

Commandment 5 “For God commanded, saying, ‘Honor your father and your mother’” (Matthew 15:4). “Honor your father and your mother” (Matthew 19:19). “Honor your father and your mother” (Mark 7:10). “Honor your father and your mother” (Mark 10:19). “You know the commandments:...Honor your father and your mother” (Luke 18:20).

BibleNewsProphecyTM is published by the *Continuing Church of God*, 1248 E. Grand Avenue, Suite A, Arroyo Grande, CA, 93420. <http://www.ccog.org>

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Bible News Prophecy-

SUPPORTED BY YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Bible News Prophecy has no subscription or newsstand price. This magazine is provided free of charge by the *Continuing Church of God*. It is made possible by the voluntary, freely given tithes and offerings of the membership of the Church and others who have elected to support the work of the Church. Contributions are gratefully welcomed and are tax-deductible in the U.S. Those who wish to voluntarily aid and support this worldwide Work of God are gladly welcomed as co-workers in this major effort to preach and publish the gospel to all nations. Contributions should be sent to: *Continuing Church of God*, 1248 E. Grand Avenue, Suite A, Arroyo Grande, CA, 93420.

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Commandment 6 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment’. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:21-22). Similarly John wrote, “He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you no that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:14-15). “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders...These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19-20). “You shall not murder” (Matthew 19:18). “...murders...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:21,23).

Commandment 7 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery’. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28). “But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery” (Matthew 5:32). “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...adulteries” (Matthew 15:19-20). “...adulteries, fornications...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:21,23).

Commandment 8 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...thefts...These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19-20). “...thefts...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:22-23).

Commandment 9 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...false witness...These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19-20). “For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God” (John 3:20-21). “...deceit...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:22-23).

Commandment 10 “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts...These are the things which defile a man” (Matthew 15:19-20). “...covetousness...All these evil things come from within and defile a man” (Mark 7:22-23).

Notice how Jesus tied evil thoughts with breaking several of the commandments.

Remember, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Jesus Also Taught

“Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with

all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40); in other words the law of God is involved in showing love to God and your neighbor!

Perhaps that is why Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15) and “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him...” (John 14:21) and “He who does not love Me does not keep My words (John 14:24) as well as “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10).

Jesus gave His famous Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and expanded the meaning of various commandments, including those of murder (Matthew 5:21-22) and adultery (Matthew 5:27-28). He expanded their definitions so that people could understand what the law of love really was about.

For further proof, Jesus said of the future, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12). Breaking the law (lawlessness) is linked to lack of love. Jesus magnified the law by explaining its direct link to love (through obedience) or evil (through violation)! The fact He was to exalt the law was even prophesied! “He will exalt the law and make it honorable” (Is 42:21). Since Jesus was to “exalt the law and make it honorable,” should His followers violate it?

“Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, ‘Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?’ So Jesus said to him...‘You know the commandments’” (Mark 10:17,19) and then He listed half of the Ten Commandments (also in Luke 18:19-20). Jesus lived and promoted the Ten Commandments.

Keeping the Commandments is a Sign of Godliness, Breaking them is Evil

In His own words, Jesus taught that keeping the Ten Commandments was good and breaking them was evil. Notice something that the Apostle Paul was inspired to write:

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with

disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. (1 Timothy 6:3-11)

Why is the “love of money” the root of all kinds of evil”? Because it is covetousness, something that the Ten Commandments teach against!

The Love of God

Who do all things work together for good for?

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

Many claim to love God, but what really is the love of God for Christians?

Notice what the Apostle John wrote:

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3).

Now by this we know we know Him if we keep His commandments. He who says ‘I know Him’, and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked...These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you (I John 2:3-6,26).

Notice that John is writing that the love of God is perfected in him who walk as Jesus walked. Jesus kept and taught the Ten Commandments. He absolutely did not teach that we

can disobey them and teach others to disobey them. Recall that Jesus taught:

Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:19).

The Psalms Teach that the Commandments Are Truth

The Bible makes it clear that the law of God and the commandments of God are truth and righteous, and are tied to salvation, but that the wicked are far from God’s law. Notice a few verses from Psalm 119:

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

126 It is time for You to act, O LORD, For they have regarded Your law as void. 127 Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, And Your law is truth.

144 The righteousness of Your testimonies is everlasting; Give me understanding, and I shall live.

150 They draw near who follow after wickedness; They are far from Your law.

151 You are near, O LORD, And all Your commandments are truth.

152 Concerning Your testimonies, I have known of old that You have founded them forever.

155 Salvation is far from the wicked, For they do not seek Your statutes.

160 The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.

163 I hate and abhor lying, But I love Your law.

165 Great peace have those who love Your law

166 LORD, I hope for Your salvation, And I do Your commandments.

172 My tongue shall speak of Your word, For all Your commandments are righteousness.

While the basic Church of God view is that the commandments show love, the basic Protestant view (followers of William Tyndale notwithstanding) seems to be that the law contained in the ten commandments is done away and that they (most Protestants) show love apart from the law. In the view of the Continuing Church of God, the cause of many of the problems people now experience is because they have rejected God’s governance over their lives, including keeping His laws. The main Protestant view seems to be that most of the problems people have are

because they live on the Earth, and that for some reason other than obeying God's commandments, paradise--which they define as being in heaven--will be better than Earth.

The Bible Repeatedly Warns of Curses for Breaking the Commandments

While this paper would be too long to list all the curses in the Bible for breaking the ten commandments, in this section I will list one set of curses from the Old Testament, and what essentially amounts as a curse from the end of the New Testament.

First, notice Deuteronomy 28:

15 "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 16 Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. 17 Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 18 Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. 19 Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.

20 "The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. 21 The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. 22 The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. 23 And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. 24 The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. 25 The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. 27 The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. 28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. 29 And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only

oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. 30 You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. 31 Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them. 32 Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no strength in your hand. 33 A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. 34 So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. 35 The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. 36 The LORD will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods--wood and stone. 37 And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you. 38 You shall carry much seed out to the field and gather but little in, for the locust shall consume it. 39 You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. 40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. 41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. 42 Locusts shall consume all your trees and the produce of your land. 43 The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. 45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. 46 And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

47 "Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from

the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50 a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. 51 And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. 52 They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. 53 You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. 54 The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, 55 so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. 56 The tender and delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, 57 her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates (Deuteronomy 28:15-57).

The USA is getting into more and more debt with aliens being owed more and more. This is a curse for this age. The starvation mentioned will be coming unless people will repent and keep the commandments--God's commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:3), as many seem to claim.

Now let's go to the end of the Bible:

14 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie (Revelation 22:14-15).

Not being able to enter the kingdom is a curse for the age to come.

God is clearly trying to tell humans that breaking the Ten

Commandments is not good. Those who do not keep them are practicing a lie.

The results of breaking the Ten Commandments are crime. On a physical level this means thefts, frauds, and murder. Additional evils from breaking the sexual laws often include betrayal, divorce, sexually-transmitted disease, and abortion --furthermore, breaking them distorts the development of true love.

Hate, oppression, greed, terrorism, and wars are also the result of not keeping the Ten Commandments.

Other New Testament Writers Agreed with Jesus about the Commandments

Paul wrote:

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil" (Romans 12:9).

"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery', 'You shall not steal', 'You shall not bear false witness', 'You shall not covet', and if there is any other commandment, all are summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'. Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).

"Abstain from every form of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:10).

The point of the law, the point of the Ten Commandments, as Paul writes above is love!

James wrote:

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war (James 4:1-2).

James even emphasized that you must keep all of the commandments to show love:

If you really fulfill the royal law according to scripture,

'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well; but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder'. Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law (James 2:8-11).

The Ten Commandments lay the foundation for an ethical way of life.

Did you know that Paul also wrote the following?

Now the purpose of the commandment is love... (1 Timothy 1:5)

John wrote:

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).

Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil...In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother (1 John 3:7,8,10).

What does the Bible teach is righteousness?

For all Your commandments are righteousness (Psalms 119:172).

Peter added, by quoting the 34th Psalm:

For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, His ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those that do evil (1 Peter 3:12).

Peter contrasted the righteous (those who keep the commandments) with the evil (those that do not).

John also wrote:

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1 John 5:2-3).

We should not let any person, or group, deceive us on this matter, the Ten Commandments reflect love.

Was the Commandment to Love the Only Command?

Some have suggested that when John wrote about commands, he only meant that Christians should love one another. The most commonly quoted verses are probably 1 John 3:23 which states, "And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment" and 1 John 4:21 which states, "And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

John also wrote, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments" (1 John 5:2). This also agrees with Paul and James who made it clear that you must keep the commandments to love your brother/neighbor (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8-11).

John apparently felt all Ten Commandments must be kept as he wrote most of the following:

Commandment 1 "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15); which is another way of saying, put nothing in the world before God. "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God" (Revelation 14:9). "Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image" (Revelation 20:4). "But the...unbelieving...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Commandment 2 "Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam...to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Revelation 2:14). "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow...My servants to...eat things sacrificed to idols" (Revelation 2:20). "But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk" (Revelation 9:20). "But ...idolaters... shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8). "But outside are...idolaters" (Revelation 22:15).

Commandment 3 "He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son" (1 John 2:22).

Commandment 4 “These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum” (John 6:59). “He who says he abides in Him ought also to walk just as He walked” (I John 2:6)--remember Jesus always went to the synagogues on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16; John 6:59).

Commandment 5 “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God” (I John 3:1).

Commandment 6 “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and we know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:15). “And they did not repent of their murders” (Revelation 9:21). “He...who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword” (Revelation 13:10). “But ...murderers...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). “But outside are...murderers” (Revelation 22:15).

Commandment 7 “For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes...is not of the Father but is of the world” (I John 2:16). “Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation” (Revelation 2:22). “And they did not repent of ...their sexual immoralities” (Revelation 9:21). “But the...sexual immoral...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). “But outside are...sexually immoral” (Revelation 22:15).

Commandment 8 Peter wrote, “But let none of you suffer as...a thief” (I Pet 4:15), but John seems to have expanded on the theme of this commandment when he wrote, “whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him” (I John 3:17). “And they did not repent of ...their thefts” (Revelation 9:21).

Commandment 9 “He who says ‘I know Him’, and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (I John 2:4). “I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth” (I John 2:21). “And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars” (Revelation 2:22). “But ...liars...shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8). “But outside are... whoever loves and practices a lie” (Revelation 22:15).

Commandment 10 “For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world” (I John 2:16).

John also wrote:

“Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may enter the through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (I John 5:2-3).

“Now by this we know we know Him if we keep His commandments. He who says ‘I know Him’, and does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk just as He walked” (I John 2:3-6).

It seems then, when John wrote about the commandments in plural, he was referring to the ten commandments and when he wrote about the commandment singular, he was referring to love (which he also tied to keeping the commandments, i.e. I John 5:2-3).

Notice what the Apostle John wrote:

“Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God” (3 John 11).

“These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you” (I John 2:26).

Be not deceived, the Ten Commandments do reflect love. Breaking the Ten Commandments is evil.

Modern Anglo-society seems to wish to break them, and that does not bode well for the USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, nor the rest of the planet (Matthew 24:21-22).

THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL LOSE GIBRALTAR AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Will the UK Lose Gibraltar and the Falklands?

What do political leaders say? What does Bible prophecy show?

David Cameron Says Britain Will Defend the Falklands

Before going further, let us look at how Dictionary.com defines a sea gate (viewed 08/05/2013):

sea gate noun a navigable channel giving access to the sea.

That is part of the definition. But for the purposes of this article, my use of sea gate implies that that some government has the land and thus is able to exert at least some control over the channel which is near that land. Such as, for example, how the UK can control access (to a degree) in and out of the Mediterranean Sea with the peninsula of Gibraltar.

Britain's Prime Minister has made statements concerning the sea gates Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands.

Notice the following news report related to the Falkland Islands:

The UK's Prime Minister David Cameron made a claim about defending one of the UK's remaining sea gates, the Falkland Islands:

David Cameron: we would fight a Falklands invasion

Britain is prepared to defend the Falkland Islands with military force if Argentina launched another invasion, David Cameron has said. (January 6, 2013; <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/9783568/David-Cameron-we-would-fight-a-Falklands-invasion.html>)

Military chiefs have drawn up plans for a 'show of force' to warn Argentina against hostile action over the Falkland Islands...

Just last week the Mr Cameron insisted that Britain would not shirk from defending the islands if Argentina attempted another invasion.

Referring to a recent briefing on the Falklands at a National Security Council meeting, the Prime Minister said: 'I get regular reports on this entire issue because I want to know that our defences are strong, our resolve is extremely strong.'



Gibraltar



Falkland Islands

(Photo by Eric Gaba)

By Bob Thiel

In the past several decades, two of the United Kingdom's remaining 'sea gates,' Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands have been in the news as other governments want them.

It got so serious that in 1982, Argentina sent its military to attempt to claim the Falkland Islands for itself.

'We have strong defences in place on the Falkland Islands, that is absolutely key, that we have fast jets stationed there, we have troops stationed on the Falklands.'

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence, said: 'Our overall military posture on the Falkland Islands remains unchanged and they remain well-defended. (January 13, 2013; <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2261616/Britain-set-military-presence-Falkland-Islands.html#ixzz2b7THKaaV>)

The war for the Falkland Islands was from 2 April 1982 – 14 June 1982. The Falkland Islands are located in the South Atlantic Ocean on a projection of the Patagonian Shelf about 310 miles (500 kilometers) east of the Patagonian/Argentinian coastline. They consist of two main islands, East Falkland and West Falkland, along with about 700 smaller islands. Stanley, which is on East Falkland, is the capital and largest city. Less than 3,000 people live on them. Argentinians refer to the islands as the Malvinas.

The UK has controlled the Falkland Islands since the 1830's and most who live there want to remain under British rule. But the Argentineans wants it back.

David Cameron Insists Gibraltar's Status Will Not Change

There are also concerns about Gibraltar as Spain wants it back:

Prime Minister David Cameron is "seriously concerned" about the escalation of tensions at the Spanish-Gibraltar border.

Spain has said it is considering a range of proposals including a new 50 euro (£43) fee to cross the border into the British territory...

Spain's latest move follows increased vehicle searches at the border last weekend...Mr Garcia-Margallo also hinted at the introduction of other measures including the closing of Spanish airspace to flights heading to Gibraltar. Gibraltar's Chief Minister Fabian Picardo has accused Spain of "sabre-rattling". (David Cameron 'seriously concerned' by Gibraltar events. BBC, August 5, 2013. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-23574507>)

Furious David Cameron today warned his Spanish counterpart to back down in the row over controls at the border with Gibraltar.

The Prime Minister told Mariano Rajoy increased checks and plans to charge £43 to enter and leave the Rock were 'totally disproportionate and unacceptable' during a 15-minute phone call...

Mr Cameron warned that UK-Spanish relations could be damaged 'unless the situation at the border improved'.

This week Gibraltar's chief minister asked Britain to send Royal Navy warships to the area in a bid to stop Spanish boat police making unauthorised incursions into the Rock's territorial waters...

A Downing Street spokesman added: 'The PM made clear that our position on the sovereignty of Gibraltar and its surrounding waters will not change...Britain's ambassador to Spain made a formal protest over 'disproportionate' checks at the border... ambassador Giles Paxman also sought an official explanation for Spanish threats to levy a charge on vehicles crossing the border and to close airspace...

'The ambassador reiterated that the UK would stand shoulder to shoulder with Gibraltar in face of threats from Spain.' (Chorley M. Cameron warns Spain it must back down from 'disproportionate and unacceptable' threats to Gibraltar. Daily Mail: MailOnline, August 7, 2013. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2385863/Cameron-warns-Spain-disproportionate-unacceptable-threats-Gibraltar.html#ixzz2bI9PSfP4>)

Exclusive: Britain has said a rapid reaction force of warships will visit Gibraltar on its way to naval exercises in the Mediterranean, even as the fierce diplomatic row over the disputed territory looked set to continue. (Farmer B, Govan F. Royal Navy warships to visit Gibraltar amid diplomatic row Telegraph, August 8, 2013. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/gibraltar/10231438/Royal-Navy-warships-to-visit-Gibraltar-amid-diplomatic-row.html>)

So, Britain is trying to tell the Spanish that Gibraltar should not be bothered and is under the protection of the UK. Spain was not pleased with these actions by the British.

Gibraltar's territory covers 6.843 square kilometers (2.642 sq mi) and it shares a 1.2-kilometer (0.75 mi) land border with Spain.

In 1704, an Anglo-Dutch force captured Gibraltar from the Kingdom of Castile during the War of the Spanish Succession. The territory was subsequently ceded to Britain "in perpetuity" under the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.

(Wikipedia).

David Cameron is right to be concerned. But that will not change Gibraltar's destiny.

Argentina and Spain Have Appealed to the United Nations and Others

There was a vote in March 2013 about whether or not the Falklands should cease British rule. The results of the vote by those living in the Falkland Islands show that they wish to remain British:

Only three vote against staying British in unsurprising landslide, which Argentina dismisses as irrelevant...

The prime minister said Argentina should take "careful note" of the referendum result and that Britain would always be there to defend the Falkland Islanders.

Despite near zero temperatures and flurries of snow and rain, the turnout was 92% from an electorate of 1,650. All but three people voted yes to the question posed on the ballots: "Do you wish the Falkland Islands to retain their current political status as an overseas territory of the United Kingdom?"

Nobody expected anything but a landslide in a vote that the Argentinian government had dismissed as illegal. (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2013/mar/12/falkland-islands-referendum-votes-yes>)

Notice that although the voting people of the Falklands have again made their preferences known, the Argentinian government has a different view.

Also, noticed that in June 2012, Argentina's President went to the United Nations to try to get the Falkland Islands:

UNITED NATIONS – Argentina's president took her country's claim to the Falkland Islands to the United Nations on Thursday, on the 30th anniversary of Britain's ouster of an Argentine invasion force from the islands.

In a highly emotional speech, President Cristina Fernandez challenged Britain to "act more intelligently" and sit down to talk about the future of the tiny archipelago. http://www.philly.com/philly/news/nation_world/159144835.html June 14, 2012

Argentina's President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner has demanded that Britain enter negotiations over the

sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

President Fernandez was addressing the UN Committee on Decolonisation on the 30th anniversary of the UK territory's liberation from Argentine occupation. She said history and geography backed Argentina's claim. But an islander told the committee Argentina was "bullying". UK Prime Minister David Cameron has said there would be "no negotiation". BBC, So, Britain is trying to tell the Spanish that Gibraltar should not be bothered and is under the protection of the UK. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-18453372>

Spain wants another sea gate, the UK's Gibraltar. Gibraltarians rejected proposals for Spanish sovereignty in a 1967 referendum and again in 2002. Gibraltar is a British overseas territory. The British Nationality Act 1981 granted Gibraltarians full British citizenship. Under the Gibraltar constitution of 2006, Gibraltar governs its own affairs, though some powers, such as defense and foreign relations, remain the responsibility of the UK Government.

Yet, that does not satisfy Spain, so notice the following:

Spain will go to the United Nations on Friday to insist that talks are opened on the sovereignty of Gibraltar. (The Telegraph, June 13, 2012. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/9329766/Spain-to-go-to-UN-over-Gibraltar-sovereignty.html>)

Thus, both Argentina and Spain have both petitioned the UN against the UK keeping territorial sea gates.

Argentina has pressed its claims to Latin America, and Spain has made its claims known to the European Union.

What Does the Bible Teach?

Notice more detail about what was told to Rebekah who had just agreed to become the wife of Isaac:

"Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them" (Genesis 24:60).

We in the Church of God have been teaching for decades that the United Kingdom and USA would ultimately lose many of their sea gates—we believe they possessed them because of blessings from God and would lose them because of blatant disobedience.

Notice a couple of prophetic warnings that are consistent with that:

58 “If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59 then the Lord will bring upon you and your descendants extraordinary plagues — great and prolonged plagues — and serious and prolonged sicknesses. 60 Moreover He will bring back on you all the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61 Also every sickness and every plague, which is not written in this Book of the Law, will the Lord bring upon you until you are destroyed. 62 You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God. 63 And it shall be, that just as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be plucked from off the land which you go to possess. (Deuteronomy 28:58-63)

24 ‘Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. 25 For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. (Leviticus 18:24-28)

23 ‘And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, 24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. 25 And I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant; when you are gathered together within your cities I will send pestilence among you; and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy. (Leviticus 26:23-25)

So, those that were promised blessings were also told that they would be subject to losing those blessings if they disobeyed God.

For many years, the major sea gates of the world were possessed/controlled by the United States (Panama Canal and certain locations in the Pacific Ocean) and the British Empire (Straits of Malacca, Singapore, Suez Canal, Bab el Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, Simon’s Town/Cape of Good Hope, Malta, etc.). And while that is no longer the case for many of them, they seem to have been prophesied to

be taken away for disobedience as well (c.f. Deuteronomy 28:15,52)—and certainly these nations have disobeyed the God of Abraham, as well as actually have lost many of those gates. Thus, it seems logical to conclude that the remaining “sea gates” that the UK has such as Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands will be separated from UK control. Spain directly, or perhaps, through the EU (or some other European confederation) indirectly, will force out British control over Gibraltar.

The fact of the losses so far of many of the Anglo sea gates should show us that various curses have begun to hit the Anglo-nations. More will as well until the Anglo nations (including the USA) will be no more.

Many people do not realize that the Anglo-descended nations received their wealth and influence partially because of blessings that God had Jacob/Israel give to the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh.

Notice the following blessing that was given to Ephraim and Manasseh by Israel/Jacob:

16 Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth...

19 “...He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.” 20 So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’” (Genesis 48:16, 19-20).

The British Empire, including the Commonwealth, was the biggest empire in the world and consisted of a company of nations. And while the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar are not technically separate nations, they are separated from the British Isles, yet consider themselves British, and are subject to both the blessings and cursings given to Israel and his descendents.

Back in 1954, the late Herbert Armstrong wrote:

The strange TRUTH of the PLANTING and the REBUILDING of David’s throne is revealed in a “riddle and a parable,” couched in symbolic language never understood until this latter day. Yet it stands, today, so clearly explained a little child could understand! It fills the 17th chapter of Ezekiel’s carefully read. Notice, first, this prophetic message is addressed, NOT to Judah, the Jews, but to the House of Israel. It is a Message to give light to the lost Ten-Tribed House of ISRAEL in these

latter days! ...“And all the trees of the field” (verse 24). A “tree” in this riddle and parable is likened to a nation. In other words, “All the nations of the earth.” “. . . , shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree.” Judah, the high tree, having the throne 130 years after Israel had been taken captive, now is brought down to the low stature of slavery. “. . . have exalted the low tree.” For 130 years Israel had been a “low tree.” Now Israel is exalted, becomes again a nation with a king. “. . . have dried up the green tree”- JUDAH, “ and have made the dry tree to flourish.” ISRAEL, headed by the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who possessed the BIRTHRIGHT, now shall flourish. become prosperous in due time. “I the Lord have spoken and have done it.” Yes, that BIRTHRIGHT is in ISRAEL. Tho LOST, tho supposed to be a Gentile nation, they are the people who were to grow into the promised multitude--the great nation, and the company of nations, possessing the gates of their enemy nations, becoming a colonizing people spreading around the world, being blessed with national resources and wealth. And, when they become thus powerful and nationally dominant, remember David’s throne will be found transplanted among them!...

Read again the prophetic promises of Genesis 22:17, and 24:60. Since the Birthright pertains to NATIONS, the “GATE” of our enemies would be such passes as Gibraltar, Suez, Singapore, Panama Canal, etc. Britain and America came into possession of every such major “gate” in this world! So we MUST be modern Israel. World War II hinged on these “gates.” They have become not only strategic passes, but the world’s greatest fortifications. (Armstrong HW. The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy. 1954)

Around the time he wrote the above, in 1954 Herbert W. Armstrong spoke in the UK and warned those who would listen that just as the British-descended nations received the sea gates as a blessing, that they would lose those gates. Many of the sea gates have been lost and ultimately the UK will lose Gibraltar and the Falklands.

The Bible does not specify how the sea gates would be lost. Basically it teaches that enemies will rule over the descendants of Israel who turn their back on God:

45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed...47 “Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in hunger, in thirst, in

nakedness, and in need of everything; and He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49 The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50 a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. 51 And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you. 52 They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you (Deuteronomy 28:45,47-52).

Losing gates was specifically prophesied. This has happened with the Anglo-descended nations and other gates, like Gibraltar and the Falklands, will also be lost.

The Bible also warns that the end time power with the ‘strongest fortresses’ (which currently would be the USA and its Anglo-allies like the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand) will be conquered and their lands divided by the final King of the North, a European Beast power:

39 Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, and advance its glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for gain. (Daniel 11:39)

And unless it happens before the fulfillment of Daniel 11:39, this fulfillment will soon lead to the loss of the Falklands as well as Gibraltar.

Conclusion: Britain Will Lose Gibraltar and the Falklands

So, there are disputes over the territorial control of both Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands.

Bible prophecy suggests that the Anglo-nations received the ‘sea gates’ as part of the blessing given to the descendants of Rebecca. Bible prophecy also teaches that those who received those types of blessings would be on the receiving end of curses as they got farther away from God.

Because of continuous disobedience, the USA and UK have lost various sea gates already.

The British Prime Minister can make statements and take physical steps to try to hold on to them, but I believe that the

Bible suggests that the UK will end up losing the Falklands as well as Gibraltar. The loss of the Falkland Islands and Gibraltar will come to pass.

ALL SAINTS' DAY, THE DAY OF THE DEAD, AND ALL SOULS' DAY



Catrinatas, such as the above, are among the most popular figures of the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico (Tomascastelazo).

By Bob Thiel

November 1st is observed by many as All Saints' Day and/or the Day of the Dead. It comes the morning/day after Halloween and All Souls' Day is normally the next day.

Are these days biblical holidays? How were they established? Catholic scholars themselves admit that the day they call "All Saints' Day" was not observed by early Christians, but was a later addition:

ALL SAINTS. As early as the fourth century, the Greeks kept on the first Sunday after Pentecost the feast of all martyrs and saints, and we still possess a sermon of St. Chrysostom delivered on that day. In the West, the feast was introduced by Pope Boniface the Fourth after he had dedicated, as the Church of the Blessed Virgin and the Martyrs, the Pantheon, which had been made over to him by the Emperor Phocas. The feast of the dedication was kept on the thirteenth of May. About 731 Gregory III. consecrated a chapel in St. Peter's

Church in honour of all the saints, from which time All Saints' Day has been kept in Rome, as now, on the first of November. From about the middle of the ninth century, the feast came into general observance throughout the West. (Addis W, Arnold T. Catholic Dictionary, 6th ed. The Catholic Publication Society Co, 1887. Nihil Obstat. EDUARDUS S. KEOGH, CONG. ORAT., Censor Deputatu Imprimatur. HENRICUS EDUARDUS, CARD. ARCHIEP. WESTMONAST. Die 18 Dec., 1883. Imprimatur. John Card. McCloskey, Archbishop of New York. Feb. 14, 1884. Copyright, Lawrence Kehoe, 1884/1887. p20).

All Saints' Day In the fourth century, neighbouring dioceses began to interchange feasts, to transfer relics, to divide them, and to join in a common feast; as is shown by the invitation of St. Basil of Caesarea (397) to the bishops of the province of Pontus. Frequently groups of martyrs suffered on the same day, which naturally led to a joint commemoration. In the persecution of Diocletian the number of martyrs became so great that a separate day could not be assigned to each. But the Church, feeling that every martyr should be venerated, appointed a common day for all. The first trace of this we find in Antioch on the Sunday after Pentecost. We also find mention of a common day in a sermon of St. Ephrem the Syrian (373), and in the 74th homily of St. John Chrysostom (407). (Mershman, Francis. "All Saints' Day." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. Nihil Obstat. March 1, 1907. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 11 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315a.htm>>)

ALL SOULS Day. A solemn commemoration of, and prayer for, all the souls in Purgatory, which the Church makes on the second of November. (Ibid, p. 20)

Since teaching that "All Saints' Day" ties in with purgatory, then that is also proof that it was not an original holy day as early Christians did not teach the Roman Catholic version of it and even today, neither do the Eastern Orthodox.

The Pantheon was originally a pagan shrine for multiple gods and was turned into a Catholic shrine for multiple "saints."



Pantheon of Rome: A Symbol of Unity Among Confusion

How All Saints' Day actually became a universal holiday shows another type of pagan connection:

All Saints' Day...It was first celebrated on May 13, A.D. 610, as the Feast of All Holy Martyrs, when the Emperor Phocas gave the ancient Pantheon to Pope Boniface IV as a church (All Saints' Day. World Book, vol 1. Chicago, 1966: 354).

The Romans built the Pantheon as a temple in honor of all their gods. The name means of all the gods...Agrippa first built the famous Pantheon in Rome in 27 B.C. (Pantheon. World Book, vol 15. Chicago, 1966: 111).

Druid...priests worshiped some gods similar to those of the Greeks and Romans, but under different names (Druid. World Book, vol 5. Chicago, 1966: 289).

Of course, some feel that although the Druids worshiped the pagan deities under different names that it is wrong, yet they accept the change of the names of the "gods" in the Pantheon to the "Catholic saints" is perfectly acceptable.

Here is a bit more on how and why the Pantheon became acceptable to the Roman Catholics:

In 607 A.D. the Roman Emperor Phocas defeated the Barbarians who were in control of Rome. The Pantheon in Rome, a pagan edifice which had been wrested from the barbarians, was given to pope Boniface IV. Originally, Emperor Hadrian built the Pantheon -- around 100 A.D. He dedicated it to the pagan goddess Cybele and to the other Roman deities. This temple became the central place in Rome where the pagans honored and commemorated their gods. With this splendid edifice now falling into the hands of professing Christians, the

question was, What should be done with it?

The pagans had dedicated it to Cybele and all their gods. But the Roman bishop now CONSECATED IT TO THE VIRGIN MARY AND ALL THE SAINTS of both sexes (see "The Mysteries of All Nations", Grant, p. 120). Thus this pagan building became "holy." No more did the pagan Romans use this edifice to pray for their dead. It was now the professing Christians who employed the Pantheon in praying for their dead.

This re-dedication of the pagan temple to Mary and others occurred in 610 A.D. Now converted into a Christian shrine, an annual festival was instituted to commemorate the event. The day chosen was May 13.

This May 13 commemoration of the dead saints was known by the name of "All Saints Day." It continued to be held in May for over two centuries -- until 834 A.D. In that year the NAME and the DATE WERE CHANGED.

Notice! "The time of celebration was altered to the FIRST OF NOVEMBER, and it was then called ALL HALLOW" -- from where we get the name Hallowe'en, ALL HALLOW merely meaning ALL HOLY, and the "een" is a contraction of evening ("Folklore", James Napier, p. 177).

Thus in 834 A.D. the Church in the Middle Ages began to celebrate Hallowe'en on the FIRST OF NOVEMBER for the first time. This was the very same day the Druids in Britain, the Norsemen in Scandinavia, and the pagan Germans among others were keeping their festival of ALL SOULS EVE, in commemoration of Saman, lord of death, and his demons (Marx, Gerhard O. The Origin of Halloween. Plain Truth Magazine, October 1967).

How Was November 1 Chosen for All Saints' Day?

Now why was November 1, chosen? Notice the following:

"It was a Druidical belief that on the eve of this festival Saman, lord of death, called together the wicked spirits that within the past 12 months had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals" ("Enc. Brit.", 11th ed., v. 12, pp. 857-8). Read what this November celebration was like! It was a pagan belief that on one night of the year the souls of the dead return to their original homes, there to be entertained with food. If food and shelter were not provided, these spirits, it was believed, would cast spells and cause havoc towards those failing to fulfill their requests. "It was the night for the

universal walking about of all sorts of spirits, fairies, and ghosts, all of whom had liberty on that night" ("Highland Superstitions", Alexander Macgregor, p. 44). Literal sacrifices were offered on this night to the spirits of the dead, when, so the belief went, they visited their earthly haunts and their friends.

There was a reason why November was chosen for that particular event. The Celts and other Northern people considered the beginning of November as their New Year. This was the time when the leaves were falling and a general seasonal decay was taking place everywhere. Thus it was a fitting time, so they reasoned, for the commemoration of the dead. Since the Northern nations at that time began their day in the evening, the eve leading up to November 1st was the beginning of the festival. According to the Roman calendar it was the evening October 31 -- hence, Hallowe'en -- the evening of All Hallows.

To exorcise these ghosts, that is, to free yourself from their supposed evil sway, you would have to set out food and provide shelter for them during the night. If they were satisfied with your offerings, it was believed they would leave you in peace. If not, they were believed to cast an evil spell on you. "In Wales it was firmly believed that on All Hallows Eve the spirit of a departed person was to be seen at midnight on every crossroad and every stile" ("Folklore and Folk-Stories of Wales", Marie Trevelyan, p. 254).

In Cambodia people used to chant: "O all you our ancestors, who are departed, deign to come and eat what we have prepared for you, and to bless your posterity and to make it happy" ("Notice sur le Cambodge", Paris 1875, E. Aymonier, p. 59).

This sort of Hallowe'en festival was strenuously observed throughout the non-Christian world. Pagans would pray to their false gods to prevent "DEMONS" and "witches" from molesting them. Notice! "The Miatecs of Mexico believed that the souls of the dead came back in the twelfth month of the year, WHICH CORRESPONDED TO OUR NOVEMBER. On this day of All Souls the houses were decked out to welcome the spirits. Jars of food and drink were set on a table in the principal room, and the family went out with the torches to meet the ghosts and invite them to enter. Then, returning to the house they knelt around the table, and with their eyes bent on the ground, prayed the souls to accept the offerings" ("Adonis", Frazer, p. 244).

This, then, is the way the heathen world celebrated

their Hallowe'en, their "All Souls Day". Although some aspects of the Hallowe'en festival varied with each country, the overall pattern and purpose remained the same...

When the German Frankish king Charlemagne invaded and conquered parts of Eastern Germany, he compelled the conquered German king, Wittekind, to be baptized and to accept Christianity. Having no choice and seeing his life was at stake, this heathen ruler who knew little or nothing about Christ -- was forced into this "conversion." And with him his entire people. This policy brought complex problems. These pagans, who were usually baptized EN MASSE, were still pagans at heart. Even though they became nominal Christians, they still yearned for many of their heathen practices, which they were expected to discard...Wittekind's Germans, now professing Christians, and other conquered pagans, had a profound influence on the ecclesiastical affairs of the church in the early 800's A. D. These barbaric and uncultured people brought with them many outright pagan practices and celebrations, Hallowe'en merely being one of many. They were fervent in clinging to their past ceremonies and observed them openly -- yet supposedly converted to Christianity. What was the church to do? Excommunicate them and thus reduce her membership? This she would not do. Was she to force them into discarding their heathen practices and adopt Italian or Roman ones? This, as she had learned in past times, was not possible.

There remained only one other way. Let the recently converted pagans keep certain of their heathen festivals, such as Hallowe'en or All Souls Day -- but label it "Christian." Of course the Germans were asked not to pray to their ancient pagan gods on this day. They must now use this day to commemorate the death of the saints. To make it easy for them, the Roman Church even CHANGED HER DATE of All Saints Day from May 13 to November 1st to satisfy the growing numbers of Germanic adherents. The Church understood the yearnings the Germans and others had for their old ways (Marx, Gerhard O. The Origin of Halloween. Plain Truth Magazine, October 1967).

Since the date was not original, and was even changed, All Saints' Day obviously never was an original apostolic practice.

Furthermore, notice what a Catholic writer wrote, that Catholic.org republished:

Why would a pope put the Catholic celebration of the

dead on top of the pagans' celebrations of the dead? Because the Catholic feasts are in continuity and fulfill the meaning of the pagan ones. (Killian Brian. Halloween, as autumn celebration, reminder God's name is hallowed. Catholic Online International News. 10/31/06. http://www.catholic.org/international/international_story.php?id=21818).

It is a fact that many associated with the Church of Rome relish and boast about pagan connections for their faith. It is the Bible that they and all should look to as the source of doctrine (cf. 2 Timothy 3:16).

What about the Day of the Dead?

The Day of the Dead is of pagan origin. The Burke Museum of Natural History notes:

"The Mexican Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festival combines ancient Mesoamerican and Christian beliefs. The Aztecs believed that the souls of the dead traveled to Mictlan, where they found rest. Several Aztec festivals merged with the Christian All Saints' and All Souls' Days to become the Day of the Dead. (Andrade M. The Day of the Dead. <http://www.burkemuseum.org/static/RR/DOFD/dofd2.htm>. Note the above is no longer at that website, but was in 2012)

El Día de los Muertos begins on October 31, All Hallows' Eve. Meant to be a time to remember the dead as well as to honor the continuity of life, the community celebrations are social and festive. Families clean and decorate their relatives' graves and eat picnic meals in the graveyard. They sing songs and reminisce about the deceased. Los Angelitos ("little angels") return on this day. On November 1, All Saints' Day, adult spirits return, drawn by the ofrendas (altars with offerings), which serve as thresholds between this world and the next...A chair near the altar allows family members to visit with the dead before they depart on November 2nd, when the altar is taken down. The fragile paper decorations, like the transience of flowers, incense, and food, are reminders of the fleeting nature of life. Altars are reminders that the dead are welcomed by the living and continue to have a relationship with us as a natural part of life itself. (Andrade M. The Day of the Dead. <http://www.burkemuseum.org/static/RR/DOFD/dofd2.htm>, viewed 08/06/13)

Regarding the Day of the Dead, Wikipedia reports:

Day of the Dead (Spanish: Día de Muertos) is a Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico and around

the world in other cultures. The holiday focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died. It is particularly celebrated in Mexico, where it is a national holiday, and all banks are closed. The celebration takes place on November 1 and 2, in connection with the Catholic holidays of All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. Traditions connected with the holiday include building private altars honoring the deceased using sugar skulls, marigolds, and the favorite foods and beverages of the departed and visiting graves with these as gifts. They also leave possessions of the deceased.

Scholars trace the origins of the modern Mexican holiday to indigenous observances dating back hundreds of years and to an Aztec festival dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl. The holiday has spread throughout the world: In Brazil, Dia de Finados is a public holiday that many Brazilians celebrate by visiting cemeteries and churches. In Spain, there are festivals and parades, and, at the end of the day, people gather at cemeteries and pray for their dead loved ones. Similar observances occur elsewhere in Europe, and similarly themed celebrations appear in many Asian and African cultures.

Here is another report about the Day of the Dead/Dia de Los Muertos:

"Dia de Los Muertos has its roots in Aztec tradition and is celebrated like a holiday in Mexico. NoMar is celebrating the event early, the actual holiday is November 1st and 2nd. According to legend, the spirits of the dead meet with the living as heaven's gates open on October 31." <http://www.kwch.com/news/kwch-rew-what-is-the-day-of-the-dead-dia-de-los-muertos-20111028,0,988587.story>

In 610 A.D., the Roman Pontiff Boniface IV established the Feast of All Holy Martyrs, on May 13. Later in 835, Pope Gregory IV transferred the celebration to November 1, and he called it "All Saints' Day" in honor of the claimed 'saints' for his faith. What activities are associated with that day? Even today, in some Catholic countries, a popular folk tradition holds that people's departed loved ones return to their former homes once a year, during this day, also known as the "Day of the Dead."

Author Frederick Filby noted, "Thus the old world perished and a year later a new era commenced in the same month. Both of these facts are indelibly enshrined in the memory of the human race. To many people right round the world November brings the Day of the Dead. In a number of ancient and primitive calendars November also brings a New

Year at a time which has neither solstice nor equinox nor astronomical event to justify it" (The Flood Reconsidered, pp. 106–107).

Some seem to feel that combining pagan practices are fine, as the following also shows:

The Filipino graveside tradition resembles the Mexican "El Dia de los Muertos," or Day of the Dead, which also coincides with All Saints Day. While the Mexican tradition has migrated to America mainly in the form of home and community altars, one local cemetery last year resurrected the graveyard tradition as it has been celebrated in Mexico for centuries.

Last year, Calvary Catholic Cemetery in East San Jose and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Silicon Valley invited families to decorate the graves of loved ones with candy skulls, photographs, ribbons and favorite food items of the deceased.

More than 500 people attended last year's inaugural event, according to Calvary spokeswoman Nicole Lecheler. This year's celebration on Oct. 29 will include Aztec dancers, skull-decorating workshops, food booths and Day of the Dead altar displays by artists, students and local community groups. (Rodriguez J. All Saints Day comes to Silicon Valley -- Filipino style. San Jose Mercury News, November 28, 2011. http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_19217399 viewed 08/06/13)

Again, these are not biblical practices. And having Aztec skull dancers should be an obvious clue to any who does not believe that they should compromise the faith of the Bible with paganism.

The dead, of course, will be resurrected, and that is the day that the dead will be revived--and modified Aztec practices will not change that.

All Souls Day

There is a festival, normally on November 2, "All Souls' Day."

Here is what The Catholic Encyclopedia reports about it and a related practice:

All Soul's Day

The commemoration of all the faithful departed is celebrated by the Church on 2 November, or, if this be a Sunday or a solemnity, on 3 November. The Office

of the Dead must be recited by the clergy and all the Masses are to be of Requiem, except one of the current feast, where this is of obligation.

The theological basis for the feast is the doctrine that the souls which, on departing from the body, are not perfectly cleansed from venial sins, or have not fully atoned for past transgressions, are debarred from the Beatific Vision, and that the faithful on earth can help them by prayers, almsdeeds and especially by the sacrifice of the Mass. (See PURGATORY.)

In the early days of Christianity the names of the departed brethren were entered in the diptychs. Later, in the sixth century, it was customary in Benedictine monasteries to hold a commemoration of the deceased members at Whitsuntide. In Spain there was such a day on Saturday before Sexagesima or before Pentecost, at the time of St. Isidore (d. 636). In Germany there existed (according to the testimony of Widukind, Abbot of Corvey, c. 980) a time-honoured ceremony of praying to the dead on 1 October. This was accepted and sanctified by the Church. St. Odilo of Cluny (d. 1048) ordered the commemoration of all the faithful departed to be held annually in the monasteries of his congregation. Thence it spread among the other congregations of the Benedictines and among the Carthusians.

Of the dioceses, Liège was the first to adopt it under Bishop Notger (d. 1008). It is then found in the martyrology of St. Protadius of Besançon (1053-66). Bishop Otricus (1120-25) introduced it into Milan for the 15 October. In Spain, Portugal, and Latin America, priests on this day say three Masses. A similar concession for the entire world was asked of Pope Leo XIII. He would not grant the favour but ordered a special Requiem on Sunday, 30 September, 1888.

In the Greek Rite this commemoration is held on the eve of Sexagesima Sunday, or on the eve of Pentecost. The Armenians celebrate the passover of the dead on the day after Easter. (Mershman, Francis. "All Souls' Day." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 1. Nihil Obstat. March 1, 1907. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. 6 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01315b.htm>>)

A diptych is a sort of notebook...The liturgical use of diptychs offers considerable interest. In the early Christian ages it was customary to write on diptychs the names of those, living or dead, who were considered as members of the Church a signal evidence of the

doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Hence the terms "diptychs of the living" and "diptychs of the dead." Such liturgical diptychs varied in shape and dimension. Their use (sacrae tabulae, matriculae, libri vivorum et mortuorum) is attested in the writings of St. Cyprian (third century) and by the history of St. John Chrysostom (fourth century), nor did they disappear from the churches until the twelfth century in the West and the fourteenth century in the East. (Maere, René. "Diptych." The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 5. Nihil Obstat. May 1, 1909. Remy Lafort, Censor. Imprimatur. +John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. 6 Aug. 2013 <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05022a.htm>>)

So, from the above we see that All Soul's Day is not part of original Christianity and the date has varied. The Roman Catholic practices to it are related to its purgatory doctrine, which is something that did not get developed until many centuries after Jesus--neither purgatory nor All Soul's Day were endorsed by the original Church of God. And those in the Continuing Church of God do not endorse it to this day. The "festivals of the dead" turn people away from God's plan of salvation as laid forth by His Holy Days. And these death festivals encourage people to commune with, appease, serve and even worship the dead.

The Bible Lists God's Holy Days and Warns about Pagan Practices

In Leviticus chapter 23, it lists:

"The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts" (vs.2).

Neither All Saints' Day, nor the Day of the Dead, and All Souls' Day are listed as one of them. None are biblically enjoined feast days for Christians (there is not any hint of them in the Bible; they may even be warned against in Deuteronomy 4:15-24). Actually the Bible warns against worshipping God the way the pagans, etc. did (Leviticus 18:3; Deuteronomy 12:31, Jeremiah 10:2-3).

And it specifically warns against creating images such as those used in the Day of the Dead:

15 Keep therefore your souls carefully. You saw not any similitude in the day that the Lord God spoke to you in Horeb from the midst of the fire: 16 Lest perhaps being deceived you might make you a graven similitude, or image of male or female (Deuteronomy 4:15-16, Douay OT).

Note: I intentionally used the Douay Old Testament translation above as it is an official Catholic-accepted translation to point out that Catholics are violating their own Bible when they are involved with images.

The Bible repeatedly warns against the practices of witches (Exodus 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10, Galatians 5:20) and dealing with ghosts/etc. (Deuteronomy 18:11, I Chronicles 10:13).

Christians who wish to remain faithful to the original apostolic faith will not observe All Saints' Day, the Day of the Dead, or All Souls' Day (nor Halloween, which is also of pagan origin).

DOES CHRISTMAS CELEBRATE CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY?



(Originally published without a listed author in the Plain Truth, December 1956)

Was Christ really born on December 25th? Did Paul and the other apostles—and the early New Testament Church—celebrate Christmas? WHY is Christmas not so much as MENTIONED anywhere in the New Testament?...It is time we learned the FACTS!

4000 Years of Christmas

Christmas was celebrated by pagans 2000 years before Christ was born. Yet it was not celebrated in Jerusalem—where Christ founded the inspired New Testament Church—until 385 AD., over three centuries after the true Church fled from Jerusalem! Why? Did you know that the pagan Romans long before the birth of Christ called December 25 the Brumalia, or birthday of the new-sun after the winter solstice? Christmas was originally celebrated in honor of pagan gods. It was IDOLATRY! Every one of these FACTS you can find in the leading Encyclopaedias, in your own public libraries! Though the Bible is silent about telling us to observe Christmas, or recording any such observance by the apostles or the early true Church, it does have something to say about the CHRISTMAS TREE! Yes, it's time you learned the TRUTH about Christmas!

(Editor's note: Early Christians actually did not celebrate birthdays, nor their own or Jesus', at all.)

HOW DID DECEMBER 25TH FINALLY GET ADOPTED BY MANY PROFESSORS OF CHRIST?



What date was Jesus born? When did December 25th get adopted by the Greco-Roman faiths?

While the Bible is clear about dates that God wants His people to observe and/or celebrate (see Leviticus 23), it does not state the date that Jesus was born nor does it give any instructions to celebrate the date of His birth.

Jesus Was Not Born on December 25th

But one thing that all interested in the truth can be sure of was that Jesus was not born on December 25th.

Why can I state that? I can state that because of the account in Luke's gospel. Notice:

1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered,

everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

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

14 "Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. (Luke 2:1-16)

Notice that, at the time of the census, Luke teaches that the shepherds were out all night in the field at the time of Jesus' birth. This is biblical evidence that Jesus could not have been born in late December for a couple of reasons. One of them is that the practice of shepherds spending the night with their flocks outside ceased each Fall.

Furthermore, related to the reason that Joseph had to go to Bethlehem (the census) at the time of Jesus' birth, even The Catholic Encyclopedia admits that the "census would have been impossible in winter" (Christmas, 1908). If something is impossible, then it did not happen. Jesus was not born on December 25th.

Partially because of this account by Luke, various ones have speculated that Jesus was born in the early Fall or perhaps

late Spring.

The Church of Rome Did Not Originally Celebrate December 25th

The early Catholic Church of Rome did not celebrate Christmas. Furthermore, Tertullian (one of its leading 2nd/3rd century writers) warned that to participate in the winter celebrations made one behold to pagan gods. There was one such celebration known as the Saturnalia that was celebrated by the heathen in late December.

Notice what Tertullian wrote about winter celebrations, such as Saturnalia (from a pagan deity whose name meant plentiful):

The Minervalia are as much Minerva's, as the Saturnalia Saturn's; Saturn's, which must necessarily be celebrated even by little slaves at the time of the Saturnalia. New-year's gifts likewise must be caught at, and the Septimontium kept; and all the presents of Midwinter and the feast of Dear Kinsmanship must be exacted; the schools must be wreathed with flowers; the flamens' wives and the aediles sacrifice; the school is honoured on the appointed holy-days. The same thing takes place on an idol's birthday; every pomp of the devil is frequented. Who will think that these things are befitting to a Christian master, unless it be he who shall think them suitable likewise to one who is not a master? (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter X. Translated by S. Thelwall. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight).

Around the time of Tertullian, the Roman Bishops Zephyrinus (199-217) and Callistus (217-222) had a reputation of compromise and corruption (and this is confirmed by such Roman Catholic saints such as Hippolytus) and allowed people in their church that compromised with paganism, etc.

Tertullian also reported:

But, however, the majority {of Greco-Roman 'Christians'} have by this time induced the belief in their mind that it is pardonable if at any time they do what the heathen do, for fear "the Name be blasphemed"...To live with heathens is lawful, to die with them is not. Let us live with all; let us be glad with them, out of community of nature, not of superstition. We are peers in soul, not in discipline; fellow-possessors of the world, not of error. But if we have no right of communion in matters

of this kind with strangers, how far more wicked to celebrate them among brethren! Who can maintain or defend this?...By us,...the Saturnalia and New-year's and Midwinter's festivals and Matronalia are frequented--presents come and go--New-year's gifts--games join their noise--banquets join their din! Oh better fidelity of the nations to their own sect, which claims no solemnity of the Christians for itself!...Not the Lord's day, not Pentecost, even if they had known them, would they have shared with us; for they would fear lest they should seem to be Christians. We are not apprehensive lest we seem to be heathens! (Tertullian. On Idolatry, Chapter XIV. Translated by S. Thelwall. Excerpted from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition Copyright © 2004 by K. Knight).

What Tertullian seems to be saying is that observing mid-winter celebrations make Christians appear to be followers of pagan gods, and since the pagans would not intentionally celebrate days considered by many to be Christian, Christians should not celebrate days that are honored by the heathen. Specifically, he felt that those who profess Christ should not celebrate Saturnalia, New Year's, or other pagan days, as even the observance is a form of idolatry. Tertullian was correct on those points.

The Roman Saturnalia and the Persian Mithraism themselves were of an even earlier pagan religion – that of the ancient Babylonian mystery cult. The ancient Babylonians celebrated the reborn Nimrod as the newborn Tammuz by worshipping an evergreen tree. The Babylonians also celebrated this rebirth during the season of the winter solstice. Jeremiah condemns ancient Israel for copying this type of paganism, and condemned the pagan use of trees in Jeremiah 10:2-4 and the evergreen tree in Jeremiah 3:13.

Those who teach "Jesus is the reason for the season" are in historic error. The initial reason for the season appears to be that many of those who somewhat professed Christ wanted to have a party. And did not care if the party was related to pagan gods.

December 25th Officially Adopted Later

The Catholic Encyclopedia teaches that:

Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church (Martindale C. Transcribed by Susanti A. Suastika. Christmas. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III. Copyright © 1908 by Robert Appleton Company. Online Edition Copyright © 2003 by K. Knight. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor.

Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

the idea of his type of 'Christians' observing the date of Mithras birth.

The above is true.

So, how did it end up getting adopted and with a December 25th date?

An Armenian scholar called Ananias of Shirak, circa 600 A.D., wrote:

The Festival of the holy Birth of Christ, on the 12th day before the feast of the Baptism, was not appointed by the holy apostles, nor by their successors either, as is clear from the canons... which is 6th of January, according to the Romans.

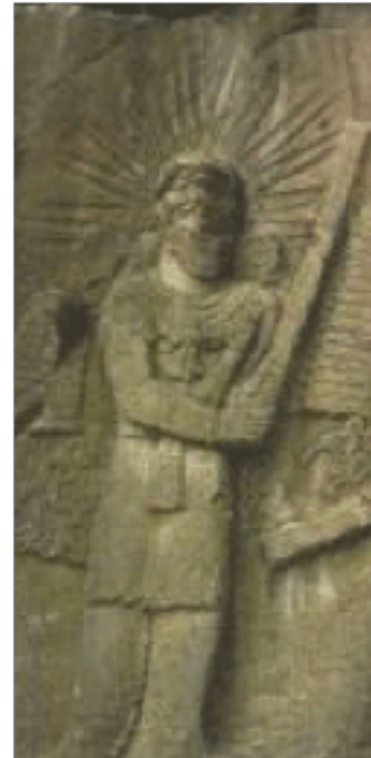
But many years after their fixing the canons, this festival was invented, as some say, by the disciples of the heretic Cerinthus; and was accepted by the Greeks, because they were truly fond of festivals and most fervent in piety; and by them it was spread and diffused all over the world. (Ananias of Shirak, *On Christmas*, The Expositor, 5th series vol. 4 (1896) Translation. pp.323-337, as reported by ccel).

Twelve days before January 6th is December 25th (see also Conybeare F.C. *The Key of Truth: A Manual of the Paulician Church of Armenia*. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1898, pp. 185). Hence, the above report suggests that December 25th was originally developed by the apostate Cerinthus. Irenaeus wrote that Cerinthus was strongly denounced who would not evenmost children not should remain in the same building with him (Irenaeus. *Adversus Haeres*. Book III, Chapter 3, Verse 4).

Why would the apostate Cerinthus pick December 25th?

Probably because that was the day of celebration of the birthday of the sun-god Mithra. December 25th also took place during the Saturnalia, hence it was acceptable to at least two groups of pagans. Followers of Mithra represented an influential group in the Roman Empire. Other practices associated with Mithraism have become part of the Roman and Orthodox Catholic churches.

The Roman Emperor Constantine, who is considered to be an Eastern Orthodox saint was a devotee to the sun god Mithras (sometimes spelled Mithra) in the fourth century. Even after he made some type of profession of Christianity, he still embraced the worship of Mithras. Mithras birthday was December 25th. Constantine had had a reputation for doing the politically expedient, and it seems that he liked



Mithras, the sun god

Notice the following from *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

Constantine the Great... Constantine can rightfully claim the title of Great, for he turned the history of the world into a new course and made Christianity... the religion of the State... it is easy to understand that many of the emperors yielded to the delusion that they could unite all their subjects in the adoration of the one sun-god who combined in himself the Father-God of the Christians and the much-worshipped Mithras; thus the empire could be founded anew on unity of religion. Even Constantine...cherished this mistaken belief... Could not Sol Deus Invictus, to whom even Constantine dedicated his coins for a long time, or Sol Mithras Deus Invictus, venerated by Diocletian and Galerius, become the supreme god of the empire? Constantine may have pondered over this. Nor had he absolutely rejected the thought even after a miraculous event had strongly influenced him in favour of the God of the Christians... It is true that the believers in Mithras also observed Sunday as well as Christmas. Consequently Constantine speaks not of the day of the Lord, but of the everlasting day of the sun. (Herbermann C., Georg Gp. Constantine the Great. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 4. Nihil Obstat. Remy Lafort, Censor. Imprimatur.

+John M. Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908).

Mithraism A pagan religion consisting mainly of the cult of the ancient Indo-Iranian Sun-god Mithra. It entered Europe from Asia Minor after Alexander's conquest, spread rapidly over the whole Roman Empire at the beginning of our era, reached its zenith during the third century, and vanished under the repressive regulations of Theodosius at the end of the fourth century...Helios Mithras is one god...Sunday was kept holy in honour of Mithra, and the sixteenth of each month was sacred to him as mediator. The 25 December was observed as his birthday, the natalis invicti, the rebirth of the winter-sun, unconquered by the rigours of the season (Arendzen J. Mithraism. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume X. Nihil Obstat, October 1, 1911. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911).

The birthday of the sun god Mithras was what Constantine observed and he wanted his followers to observe. And it ended up getting officially adopted by the Greco-Roman bishops.

The *World Book Encyclopedia* notes,

In 354 A.D., Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun (Sechrist E.H. Christmas. World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 3. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1966, pp. 408-417).

It needs to be understood that some scholarly sources believe that the celebration in Rome of Christmas may have began 2-3 decades earlier (by Constantine), but none I am aware of suggest it was prior Constantine in the fourth century.

There have been scholars who believe that Constantine was involved as tradition claims a certain church in Rome as the first site of a December 25th "Christmas" celebration as the following 2007 news account indicates:

The church where the tradition of celebrating Christmas on Dec. 25 may have begun was built near a pagan shrine as part of an effort to spread Christianity, a leading Italian scholar says.

Italian archaeologists last month revealed an underground grotto that they believe ancient Romans

revered as the place where a wolf nursed Rome's legendary founder, Romulus, and his twin brother, Remus. A few feet from the grotto, or "Lupercal," the Emperor Constantine built the Basilica of St. Anastasia, where some believe Christmas was first celebrated on Dec. 25...

It opted to mark Christmas, then celebrated at varying dates, on Dec. 25 to coincide with the Roman festival celebrating the birth of the sun god, Andrea Carandini, a professor of archaeology at Rome's La Sapienza University, told reporters Friday. The Basilica of St. Anastasia was built as soon as a year after the Nicaean Council. It probably was where Christmas was first marked on Dec. 25, part of broader efforts to link pagan practices to Christian celebrations in the early days of the new religion, Mr. Carandini said. "The church was built to Christianize these pagan places of worship," he said. "It was normal to put a church near these places to try to 'save' them." Rome's archaeological superintendent, Angelo Bottini, who did not take part in Mr. Carandini's research, said that hypothesis was "evocative and coherent" and "helps us understand the mechanisms of the passage from paganism to Christianity." (Scholars link 1st yule church to pagan shrine. Washington Times - Dec 23, 2007 ROME (AP). <http://washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071223/FOREIGN/924350661/1001viewed12/24/07>).

And the December 25th date was adopted apparently because the Greco-Roman church was filled with people, who did not care that this was the Saturnalis/Mithra birthday, so calling it by the name of Christ somehow was believed to make the sun rebirth activities more acceptable.

It may be of interest to note that the December 25th Christmas did not become part of the official observations in Constantinople until the famous hater of Jews, John Chrysostom, introduced it there:

We may take it as certain that the feast of Christ's Nativity was kept in Rome on 25 December...It was introduced by St. John Chrysostom into Constantinople and definitively adopted in 395 (Thurston. H. Transcribed by Rick McCarty. Christian Calendar. The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume III. Published 1908. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Nihil Obstat, November 1, 1908. Remy Lafort, S.T.D., Censor. Imprimatur. +John Cardinal Farley, Archbishop of New York).

Furthermore, here is even more that *The Catholic Encyclopedia* teaches about Christmas:

Christmas...Irenaeus and Tertullian omit it from their lists of feasts; Origen, glancing perhaps at the discreditable imperial Natalitia, asserts (in Lev. Hom. viii in Migne, P.G., XII, 495) that in the Scriptures sinners alone, not saints, celebrate their birthday; Arnobius (VII, 32 in P.L., V, 1264) can still ridicule the “birthdays” of the gods.

Alexandria. The first evidence of the feast is from Egypt. About A.D. 200, Clement of Alexandria (Strom., I, xxi in P.G., VIII, 888) says that certain Egyptian theologians “over curiously” assign, not the year alone, but the day of Christ’s birth, placing it on 25 Pachon (20 May) in the twenty-eighth year of Augustus...

Cyprus, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Asia Minor. In Cyprus, at the end of the fourth century, Epiphanius asserts against the Alogi (Hær., li, 16, 24 in P. G., XLI, 919, 931) that Christ was born on 6 January...

Rome. At Rome the earliest evidence is in the Philocalian Calendar (P. L., XIII, 675; it can be seen as a whole in J. Strzygowski, Kalenderbilder des Chron. von Jahre 354, Berlin, 1888), compiled in 354, which contains three important entries. In the civil calendar 25 December is marked “Natalis Invicti”...

By the time of Jerome and Augustine, the December feast is established, though the latter (Epp., II, liv, 12, in P.L., XXXIII, 200) omits it from a list of first-class festivals. From the fourth century every Western calendar assigns it to 25 December...

The Gospels. Concerning the date of Christ’s birth the Gospels give no help; upon their data contradictory arguments are based. The census would have been impossible in winter: a whole population could not then be put in motion...

Natalis Invicti. The well-known solar feast, however, of Natalis Invicti, celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date. For the history of the solar cult, its position in the Roman Empire, and syncretism with Mithraism, see Cumont’s epoch-making “Textes et Monuments” etc., I, ii, 4, 6, p. 355...The earliest rapprochement of the births of Christ and the sun is in Cypr., “De pasch. Comp.”, xix, “O quam præclare providentia ut illo die quo natus est Sol . . . nasceretur Christus.” - “O, how wonderfully acted Providence that on that day on which that Sun was born . . . Christ should be born.”...

Cards and presents. Pagan customs centering round

the January calends gravitated to Christmas...

The yule log. The calend fires were a scandal even to Rome, and St. Boniface obtained from Pope Zachary their abolition (Martindale C. Christmas, 1908).

Hence it is clear that even early Roman writers such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen did not endorse Christmas, nor did Augustine even list it as an important holiday. And that even later Catholic sources recognize that it is not likely that a census (as shown in Luke 2:1) would be done during the winter--making a December 25th date of birth unlikely (it was also too cold for shepherds to spend the night with their flocks out in an open field, as shown in Luke 2:8, making a December 25th birth basically impossible).

Some How Did December 25th Get Accepted?

December 25 was tied in with the winter solstice celebrations that ancient pagan cultures had.

A well known heretic, Cerinthus, may have introduced the December 25th date into his highly apostate group, because of the pagan celebrations.

When Roman Bishops, such as Zephyrinus and Callistus gained power, they apparently compromised in many ways, and thus many associated with their church choose to celebrate the Saturnalia.

It also appears that towards the beginning of the third century, there were some in Alexandria (not Asia Minor, or even Rome) who began to feel that Jesus’ birth should be celebrated, and that it would be in May.

But later, in the fourth century, Christmas began to be celebrated with either January 6th or December 25 being the dates observed.

To a great degree a winter date was chosen, because the sun-worshipping Emperor Constantine, and/or one of his successors, wanted to have a Sun holiday at the time of Saturnalia and Brumalia to placate the Gentiles (it should be noted that while Catholic scholars admit the probable pagan origins of the date and celebrations associated with Christmas, they tend to not believe that it was derived from Saturnalia).

December 25th has a long history of being used in pagan worship, and because various ones consider that the sun-worshipping Emperor Constantine was “great” and/or a “saint” and his influence was powerful. They ended

up selecting December 25th as the date to supposedly celebrate the birth of Jesus; a date that Jesus could not have been born on.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES FOR EFFECTIVE PARENTING



By Bob Thiel

Many have ideas about raising children. While this is not an easy task, this article may give you some insights.

When I was younger, I sometimes volunteered to look after some children after church services. Some of the parents were very permissive and some were excessively strict. Actually, the fact that their children needed to be watched as extensively as I often had to, suggested to me that perhaps they were not being raised correctly. And none those that come immediate to mind when I did this, either the parents or the children, actually stayed in the Church of God.

Despite sermons and books, and even what is in this article, parenting is something that is often learned on the job. You often have to deal with situations that you had not expected. This short article is not going to deal with all aspects of child rearing, but hopefully will give you a few simple rules to follow that will help you become a better and more effective parent.

To begin with, here are five simple rules to be an effective parent:

1. First, spend time with your children.
2. Second, do not lie to them-ever.
3. Third, do not live like a hypocrite.
4. Fourth, you need to teach children about God and His laws (Deuteronomy 6:6-7), which also gives them boundaries.
5. And fifth, do not be afraid to provide proper discipline.

Each of the five will be elaborated briefly in this article.

Rule #1 Spend Time with Your Children

When children are first born, they demand a lot of time. However, as they get older, they demand a lot less. But just because they demand less, that does not mean that you should ignore them. You should spend time with them. Time eating, time working with them, time discussing their education, time doing fun activities with them, time in church with them, time teaching them, and simply time with them (cf. Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6).

If you spend time with your children, including when they are teenagers, they will be more comfortable with you and more inclined to communicate with you as well as to actually also want to spend time with you. And they will probably have a much better relationship with you once they are old enough to be out on their own.

Rule #2 Do Not Lie to Your Children

Do not lie to your children--ever. This includes not lying about Santa Claus, the tooth fairy, or anything else. This does not mean that you have to tell them everything about your personal life that they ask, but it does mean that if you always tell them the truth you will be more honorable and trustworthy in their eyes. And they will not tend to forget that.

Remember, one of the Ten Commandments is: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12) and liars are not honorable. Notice something Jesus said about liars:

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. (John 8:44)

Also notice:

8...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

Be an honorable parent. Do not be a liar.

Rule #3 Do Not Live as a Hypocrite

There are people who live one way in public and another in

their private life. Children can see that, and should not be raised with that type of deceit. The same group of people that Jesus referred to as liars in John 8:44, He also often called hypocrites:

7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

9 And in vain they worship Me...(Matthew 15:7-9)

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. (Matthew 23:25-28)

Parents, you need to be really converted.

The Bible also teaches, "And the hope of the hypocrite shall perish" (Job 8:13)--if you hope that your children will turn out well, then try not to live as a hypocrite.

Rule # 4 Teach Your Children about God and His Laws

The Bible is clear that parents are supposed to spend a lot of time with their children and to teach children the laws of God. This gives children both proper rules and practical boundaries.

Here are a couple of scriptures related to that:

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!
5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

6 Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

Notice that you are to teach your children to love God. There is also another related commandment:

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:39)

31 And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. (Luke 6:31)

Children who love God and properly love their neighbor are much less likely to get involved in certain inappropriate behaviors.

The Bible also ties in living God's way and teaching your children and your grandchildren:

9 Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren (Deuteronomy 4:9).

Rule #5 Do Not be Afraid of Proper Discipline

Remember you are your child's parent. And while that does not mean that you also cannot be a friend (and spending a lot of time with them helps on the friendship side), government authorities and the Bible expect you to provide proper discipline (though government authorities do not always understand how that should be provided, so caution is advised--cf. Amos 5:13).

The Bible teaches:

13 Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you spank them. (Proverbs 23:13, New Living Translation, NLT)

10 Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, And he who hates correction will die. (Proverbs 15:10)

17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul. (Proverbs 29:17)

Most children should not need much in the way of "harsh" discipline. And in modern society, be cautious about the wisdom of spanking (legally it is not allowed in various counties). But children should have rules and boundaries and be subject to discipline if they violate those rules and boundaries.

There are many ways to provide discipline. Talking with

them, removing or restricting privileges, as well as my favorite, giving children additional work to do. Having children pull weeds was one of my favorite forms of disciplinary punishment. Also, as they get older, properly raised children normally will respond to simply expressing your disappointment in them as sufficient discipline.

Concluding Comments on the Five Rules for Effective Parenting

While parenting is challenging, the five simple rules of effective parenting should ultimately make your job easier. Remember to spend time with your children, do not lie to them do not live like a hypocrite, teach children about God and His laws (Deuteronomy 6:6-7), and do not be afraid to provide proper discipline.

If you are a Christian and live your life as one and spend time with your children, many child rearing problems that others face will not likely affect you. This does not mean that you will never have any problems or that your children may never rebel, but if you follow these five rules, you will go a long way in being a more effective parent and doing a biblically-proper job of child rearing.

When you do encounter unexpected problems, do not forget to study your Bible, pray, and sometimes counsel with others for assistance.

BINGE DRINKING IS NOT A SIGN OF SUCCESS



By Bob Thiel

Although Jesus drank alcohol (cf. Matthew 11:19 and even made some (John 2:1-10), the Bible condemns excessive drinking and drunkenness.

In modern Western societies, one disturbing trend had been the increased amount of “binge drinking” that occurs on many university campuses.

Not a Godly Sign of Success

A study of university students in the USA found that “binge drinking” alcohol to excess is supposedly sign of increased social success, despite the fact that many do not like it:

“Binge-drinking college students are happier than their non-binge-drinking peers,” reports a study presented this week at a meeting of the American Sociological Assn. in Denver.

And the reason? “It may be because, at these schools, binge drinking is associated with high status and binge drinkers are happier with their college social experience than their non-binge-drinking peers,” the authors go out on a limb in explaining...

Here are some facts from the study, conducted at a northeastern liberal arts college and based on surveys from 1,595 students:

– Fully 64% of students at this college indulged in binge drinking — defined as consuming four drinks for women and five drinks for men — in a single session at least once within a two-week period. <http://www.latimes.com/health/boostershots/la-heb-kids-who-binge-drink-in-college-have-more-fun-20120820,0,4728141.story>

“One thing that was a recurrent comment were students who said, ‘Everyone drinks here. ... I don’t want to get drunk, but I feel like I don’t belong here if I don’t.’ ... Then the next person would write, ‘I don’t really want to drink, but this is what everyone else does.’ And the next person would write, ‘You know, I don’t mind drinking a little, but I don’t want to get smashed, but everyone does that,’” Hsu said.

“I look at this and I think, ‘Why don’t you guys just have a party without drinking? None of you want to be doing this!’” Hsu added...

At the university studied, “this behavior is so associated with being higher status that if you don’t do it, you don’t have as high levels of social satisfaction,” she said.

One glimmer of hope, Hsu said, was that students in religious organizations who did not binge drink were more socially satisfied than other low-status non-bingers.

“If you’re in a community that’s big enough that creates its own social life, you might actually get to not care what the mainstream campus message is,” she said. She added that she hopes the findings encourage students to back away from the booze. <http://www.foxnews.com/health/2012/08/20/study-college-binge-drinkers-report-being-happier-than-non-binge-drinkers/#ixzz24Be3i0wz>

It is interesting to note that students that attempt to have a greater religious connection do not feel the need to drink heavily for happiness, satisfaction, etc.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Fact Sheet on Binge Drinking states:

According to national surveys

- Approximately 92% of U.S. adults who drink excessively report binge drinking in the past 30 days.
- Although college students commonly binge drink, 70% of binge drinking episodes involve adults age

26 years and older.

- The prevalence of binge drinking among men is higher than the prevalence among women.
- Binge drinkers are 14 times more likely to report alcohol-impaired driving than non-binge drinkers.
- About 90% of the alcohol consumed by youth under the age of 21 in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.
- About 75% of the alcohol consumed by adults in the United States is in the form of binge drinks.
- The proportion of current drinkers that binge is highest in the 18- to 20-year-old group (51%).

Binge drinking is associated with many health problems, including—

- Unintentional injuries (e.g., car crashes, falls, burns, drowning).
- Intentional injuries (e.g., firearm injuries, sexual assault, domestic violence).
- Alcohol poisoning.
- Sexually transmitted diseases.
- Unintended pregnancy.
- Children born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.
- High blood pressure, stroke, and other cardiovascular diseases.
- Liver disease.
- Neurological damage.
- Sexual dysfunction.
- Poor control of diabetes. (<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm>)

While light alcohol consumption (no more than one drink in a day for most people) has health benefits, excessive consumption of alcohol is dangerous.

The CDC also reports the following for its Fact Sheet on Excessive Alcohol Use and Risks to Men's Health:

Injuries and deaths as a result of excessive alcohol use

- Men consistently have higher rates of alcohol-related deaths and hospitalizations than women.
- Among drivers in fatal motor-vehicle traffic crashes, men are almost twice as likely as women to have been intoxicated (i.e., a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08% or greater).
- Excessive alcohol consumption increases aggression and, as a result, can increase the risk of physically assaulting another person.
- Men are more likely than women to commit

suicide, and more likely to have been drinking prior to committing suicide.

Reproductive Health and Sexual Function

Excessive alcohol use can interfere with testicular function and male hormone production resulting in impotence, infertility, and reduction of male secondary sex characteristics such as facial and chest hair.

Excessive alcohol use is commonly involved in sexual assault. Impaired judgment caused by alcohol may worsen the tendency of some men to mistake a women's friendly behavior for sexual interest and misjudge their use of force. Also, alcohol use by men increases the chances of engaging in risky sexual activity including unprotected sex, sex with multiple partners, or sex with a partner at risk for sexually transmitted diseases.

Cancer

Alcohol consumption increases the risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, and colon in men. <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/mens-health.htm>

The CDC also reports the following for its Fact Sheet on Excessive Alcohol Use and Risks to Women's Health:

Reproductive Health

- National surveys show that about 6 out of every 10 women of child-bearing age (i.e., aged 18–44 years) use alcohol, and slightly less than one-third of women who drink alcohol in this age group binge drink.
- In 2008, about 7.2% of pregnant women used alcohol.
- Excessive drinking may disrupt menstrual cycling and increase the risk of infertility, miscarriage, stillbirth, and premature delivery.
- Women who binge drink are more likely to have unprotected sex and multiple sex partners. These activities increase the risks of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Alcohol and Pregnancy

- Women who drink alcohol while pregnant increase their risk of having a baby with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). The most severe form is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), which causes

mental retardation and birth defects.

- FASD are completely preventable if a woman does not drink while pregnant or while she may become pregnant.
- Studies have shown that about 1 of 20 pregnant women drank excessively before finding out they were pregnant.⁸ No amount of alcohol is safe to drink during pregnancy. For women who drink during pregnancy, stopping as soon as possible may lower the risk of having a child with physical, mental, or emotional problems.
- Research suggests that women who drink alcohol while pregnant are more likely to have a baby die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). This risk substantially increases if a woman binge drinks during her first trimester of pregnancy.
- The risk of miscarriage is also increased if a woman drinks excessively during her first trimester of pregnancy.

Other Health Concerns

- **Liver Disease:** The risk of cirrhosis and other alcohol-related liver diseases is higher for women than for men.
- **Impact on the Brain:** Excessive drinking may result in memory loss and shrinkage of the brain. Research suggests that women are more vulnerable than men to the brain damaging effects of excessive alcohol use, and the damage tends to appear with shorter periods of excessive drinking for women than for men.
- **Impact on the Heart:** Studies have shown that women who drink excessively are at increased risk for damage to the heart muscle than men even for women drinking at lower levels.
- **Cancer:** Alcohol consumption increases the risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, liver, colon, and breast among women. The risk of breast cancer increases as alcohol use increases.
- **Sexual Assault:** Binge drinking is a risk factor for sexual assault, especially among young women in college settings. Each year, about 1 in 20 college women are sexually assaulted. Research suggests that there is an increase in the risk of rape or sexual assault when both the attacker and victim have used alcohol prior to the attack. <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/womens-health.htm>

So, fornication, rape, and other sexually-related sins are also associated with binge drinking to excess.

The Bible itself condemns, not alcohol (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23;

John 2:1-10), but drunkenness. And it does not limit its condemnations to those of the USA.

Notice the following:

1 Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, And whoever is led astray by it is not wise. (Proverbs 20:1)

20 Do not mix with winebibbers, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; 21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe a man with rags. (Proverbs 23:20-21)

1 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, Whose glorious beauty is a fading flower Which is at the head of the verdant valleys, To those who are overcome with wine! 2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one, Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing, Who will bring them down to the earth with His hand. 3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, Will be trampled underfoot; (Isaiah 28:1-3)

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation (Ephesians 5:18)

The partying drunkard is also specifically condemned as part of those that will not inherit the kingdom of God:

9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

The fact that the average college binge drinker is defined as one who gets drunk doing this at least twice per month shows the lack of concern for biblical morality.

The Bible also condemns those who encourage others to

drink excessively, and also hints of possible sexual violation when one does drink excessively:

5 “Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor,
Pressing him to your bottle,
Even to make him drunk,
That you may look on his nakedness!
16 You are filled with shame instead of glory.
You also — drink!
And be exposed as uncircumcised!
The cup of the Lord’s right hand will be turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your glory. (Habakkuk 2:15-16)

The Bible teaches that those who turn from such behavior can face societal criticisms, yet avoiding what the world encourages along these lines is what Christians are supposed to do:

3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles — when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. 4 In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. (1 Peter 4:3-4)

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner — not even to eat with such a person. (1 Corinthians 5:11)

13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. (Romans 13:13)

If you, or a loved one, has a problem with binge drinking or anything else to do with alcohol, pray about it and seek counsel.

In addition to contacting the ministry, secular sources can also be of assistance. A list of sources from the CDC can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/resources.htm> Furthermore, there are groups like Alcoholics Anonymous in many other nations. People with alcohol problems can be helped. And the Bible encourages people to leave the “binge drinking” lifestyle.

Excessive binging on alcohol is serious problem in many societies. And is one that needs to be repented of. Binge drinking is not a biblical sign of success.

ABORTION AND US DEBT: ANY RELATIONSHIP?



Medieval Abortion Drug Being Given

By Bob Thiel

Abortion, the killing of an unborn human baby, is not new. It has been around for thousands of years. Some do not feel that it hurts anyone other than the aborted child and possibly the child’s mother.

But could it have other affects on societies that were supposedly based upon beliefs they learned from the Bible, such as the United States of America?

Is there any relationship between negative changes in the debt of the United States and its positions on abortion? Many would question that, but the facts are interesting for Christians to ponder.

While abortions were historically illegal in the USA since its declared independence in 1776, this began to change in the late 1960s:

Between 1967 and 1973 one-third of the states liberalized or repealed their criminal abortion laws. However, the right to have an abortion in all states was only made available to American women in 1973 when the Supreme Court struck down the remaining restrictive state laws with its ruling in *Roe v. Wade*. (History of Abortion. National Abortion Federation. http://www.prochoice.org/about_abortion/history_abortion.html viewed 04/02/13)

Since States began to “liberalize” or repeal anti-abortion laws, the economic situation in the USA began to change

(bolding and italics in source):

Until 1970, the United States had a trade surplus and an inflow of money sometimes called a favorable balance of trade. After 1970, for the first time in a century, the United States was buying more goods abroad than it sold. It moved from a trade surplus to a trade deficit, when imports exceed exports, and money was flowing out of the United States in payments to foreign countries for imports. Since 1970, the unfavorable trade balance and trade deficit has grown...

After World War II until 1970, the United States was a creditor nation lending money to other countries. As a creditor nation, other countries owed more money to the United States than the United States owed to foreign countries.

After 1970, the United States became a net debtor nation. As a debtor nation, the United States owes more money to foreign countries than the foreign countries owe the United States. The United States is now the largest debtor among all nations. (Howard J. Sherman, E. K. Hunt, Reynold F. Nesiba, Phillip Anthony O'Hara. Economics: An Introduction to Traditional and Progressive Views, 7th edition. M.E. Sharpe, 2008, p. 175)

It should be pointed out that although others believe that the line from an overall creditor to debtor nation happened in the 1980s (as opposed to annually which began around 1971), the process began earlier:

March 22, 2010 – Only a few decades ago, the United States was the world's largest creditor nation. American capital spanned the globe financing all types of investments in virtually every country. But that dominance began to erode in the 1960s...By the 1980s, the inevitable happened. As generations of accumulated wealth disappeared, a line was crossed. America now owed more to the rest of the world than the world owed to it. The United States had become a debtor nation, and it has continued to run up the tab in the decades since. (Turk J. Debtor Nation. <http://www.fgmr.com/debtor-nation.html> viewed 04/03/13)

Notice two public statements from US President Barack Obama:

Beyoncé could not be a better role model for my girls. (Barack Obama: Beyoncé is the perfect role model for my daughters. The Guardian, September 20, 2012)

{Abortion} I remain committed to protecting a woman's right to choose and this fundamental constitutional right. (January 22, 2012: President Obama's statement issued on the 39th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Shown at 2012.Presidential-Candidates.org)

Beyoncé is a female American singer who often seems to violate standards of modesty (cf. 1 Timothy 2:9). Abortion is murder, and abortion is wrong. Promoting and/or approving biblically-condemned actions is dangerous and puts the U.S.A. at increasing risk God's judgment (Romans 1:32). And some of that judgment is upon us: The rate of USA indebtedness also has greatly accelerated since 2008. And the USA is far and away the most indebted nation of all time.

The Bible warns that leaders can cause people to do worse and have major problems:

12 As for My people, children are their oppressors, And women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, And destroy the way of your paths." (Isaiah 3:12)

16 For the leaders of this people cause them to err, And those who are led by them are destroyed (Isaiah 9:16).

To consider that since movement in the USA towards the Roe vs. Wade decision in 1973, not only have 55,000,000 or so babies been aborted/murdered, the USA has gone from being the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor nation. This is not good.

According to the Bible, debt is a curse of disobeying God:

43 "The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. 45 "Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. (Deuteronomy 28:43-45)

The destruction of the USA is coming and abortion in one of the many reasons.

Also notice what has happened to the economy of the United States:

In real terms, as mentioned above, US growth in the 21st century seems to have fallen back to medieval levels.

Why?...Because the economy failed to produce real growth. After 1973, wages, for example, adjusted for inflation, went nowhere. (Bonner B. Economic Growth in the Internet Age. Daily Reckoning, June 23, 2011)

The typical working stiff earns less real money today than he did 40 years ago. (Bonner B. Economic Long Live the 1%. Daily Reckoning, November 25, 2011)

Coincidence or curse? The reality is that prior to abortions becoming "legalized" in the late 1960s and then nationally in 1973, most people in the USA seemed to understand that it was not wise to consume more than you produce. Now, with more abortion and less understanding of other basic biblically-supported economic concepts, a culture that accepts this type of debt and living off of others has flourished. But it will NOT last. This is extremely dangerous and few in the USA seem to understand that the USA will ultimately have its creditors rise up against it:

6 "Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, 'Woe to him who increases What is not his — how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges?' 7 Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty. 8 Because you have plundered many nations, All the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men's blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it. (Habakkuk 2:6-8)

Abortion shed's human blood. The USA has greatly increased debt along with its increased acceptance of abortion. Destruction to the strongest military power is prophesied (cf. Daniel 11:39).

CONTINUING CHURCH OF GOD WEBSITES

CCOG.ORG This is the official website of the *Continuing Church of God*

CCOG.AFRICA (Kiswahili/Africa) This is a site that has been reserved and intended to be directed towards Africa with materials in Kiswahili and English is in process.

CCOG.ASIA This site has various articles in Mandarin Chinese as well as some in English, with other Asian languages in process, such as Korean.

CCOG.IN This is a website targeted towards those of Indian heritage. It has limited information in the Hindi language. It is expected to have more non-English language materials in the future.

CCOG.EU This is a website targeted toward Europe. It has materials in more than one language (currently it has English, Dutch, and Serbian, with links also to Spanish) and it is intended to have additional language materials added.

CDLIDD.ES La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios This is the Spanish site for the *Continuing Church of God* known as La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios in Spanish.

COGWRITER.COM This site has the most articles of any as well as daily news and prophecy posts.

PNIND.PH (Paniniwala ng Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos) This is a website in progress for the Philippines and those who also understand the language of Tagalog.

youtube.com/BibleNewsProphecy This is the Bible News Prophecy YouTube channel. This has sermonette length videos of prophetic and doctrinal interest.

youtube.com/continuingcog This YouTube channel has sermons, offertories, and sometimes other sermonettes of the *Continuing Church of God*.

Fulfilling Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20



Continuing Church of God www.cog.org
Daily Bible News Prophecy www.cogwriter.com



BibleNewsProphecy channel
www.youtube.com/BibleNewsProphecy

ContinuingCOG channel
www.youtube.com/continuingcog

The leading pastor in *Continuing Church of God* is a regular radio guest using radio to reach audiences in many areas.

The *Continuing Church of God* also uses printed and electronic magazines, books, and weekly letters to the Brethren to also support Matthew 24:14 and Matthew 28:19-20

