



## Jesus is NOT 'The Reason for the Season' by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

**Question:** "Why do you not emphasize the religious nature of Christmas? Don't you see that Jesus is the reason for the season?"

### **Answer:**

What the Bible teaches about the birth of the Son of God and the pagan travesty that passes for "Christmas" are NOT the same, unfortunately.

### **"THE REASON" WITHOUT "THE SEASON."**

The Bible teaches that:

- Jesus was born of a virgin (**Matthew 1:18-25**);
- In Bethlehem (**Luke 2:1-7**);
- Shepherds saw the babe in a manger (**Luke 2:7, 12, 16**);
- Wise men saw a young child (**Matthew 2:10-11**);
- Herod killed all sons 2 years old and under "according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (**Matthew 2:16**).

There were **no**:

- Wise men *at the manger*;
- Names for the wise men;
- Backgrounds of the wise men;
- Talking animals;
- Shepherds and wise men *together* at the manger;
- Little drummer boys; or
- Worship of Mary, the mother of Jesus!

Fiction and Scripture, or haphazardly- mixed Bible truths, concoct man-made "myths," are uninspired by God and unnatural to truth. Peter warned of things:

... Hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures (**2 Peter 3:16**).

No Scripture gives command or example that Christians are to celebrate Christ's birth with rite and ceremony. Sinners are saved by faith in His death and resurrection through water immersion (**Acts 10:47-48**; **Romans 6:1-5**; **Galatians 3:26-29**); and Christians observe the Lord's Supper (**Matthew 26:26-29**; **Acts 20:7**). Other than "the first day of the week" (**1 Corinthians 16:2**), New Testament Christians did not have a religious calendar of days or events (**Galatians 4:10-11**).

## **PAGANS HAD "THE SEASON" WITHOUT "THE REASON."**

Before Jesus was born, there were:

- the Scandinavians' Yuletide season and Yule log;
- the Phrygian sun-god, Attis', and the Persian sun-god, Mithras' birthday on December 25;
- Romans' Saturnalia festival (with flowers, candles, and gift exchange) on December 17-24 for the god, Saturn;
- Persians' and Babylonians' Sacaea in December;
- Greeks' festival to Kronos.

"The season" held sway among pagans to celebrate a change of season or year but without Jesus Christ! Festive practices, apart from their idolatrous intent, might be insignificant to Christians (**1 Corinthians 10:23- 11:1**); but in 137 A.D. the Catholic Bishop of Rome ordered the birthday of the Christ Child celebrated as a solemn feast. In 354 A.D. another Bishop of Rome, Julius I, chose December 25th as the observance of Christmas, replacing January 6. This manufacturing of truth is exactly what Peter said the apostles did NOT do:

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty (**2 Peter 1:16-19**).

"Cunningly devised fables" are "pagan stories woven together with Scriptural facts," the very thing that Catholicism has done! The apostles witnessed what they had seen and touched and heard, as revealed by God. They did not adapt the Gospel to culture folklore, nor adopt cultural myths into the Gospel. For instance, in Lystra at Paul's command, a man lame from birth walked (**Acts 14:8-10**). The idolaters placed their pagan interpretation on the deed (**Acts 14:11-13**), which Paul promptly refused and refuted (**Acts 14:14-18**). Their pagan belief blending with Scriptural truth was blasphemous and diluted the faith. Paul rejected pagan worship, but Catholicism and denominations have mixed "oxen and garlands" (**Acts 14:13**) into the account of Jesus' birth.

## **THE "REAL REASON FOR THE SEASON."**

Perhaps the real "reason for the season" has been to establish the superiority of Mary over the Christ-child. Many cultures and religions have the concept of a "Mother of God," or even a "Mother God:"

- Semiramis and Tammuz (Babylon);
- Nutria and child (Etruscan);
- Virgo-Patitura and child (Druid);
- Isis and Horus (Egypt);
- Devaki and Krishna (India);
- Venus/ Fortuna and Jupiter (Roman); and the
- Ephesians' Diana (Acts 19:35).

An Israelite stumbling block was the Sidonians' goddess Ashtoreth (**Judges 2:13; 1 Kings 11:33**), which displeased God (**2 Kings 23:8; Jeremiah 44:16-30**). A commentary on **Jeremiah 44:17** points out that the sun was worshiped as "Baal" a.k.a. "Lord of heaven" or "Molech" a.k.a. "King"; and the Moon was probably "The Queen of heaven." It adds:

In Epiphanius, we find some women of Arabia, towards the end of the fourth century, had set up another queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary...whom they likewise worshipped as a goddess, by holding stated assemblies every year to her honour... (**The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge**).

Since God promised a son through a woman's "seed" (**Genesis 3:15**), the Devil has been hard at work creating false fulfillments in paganism. Moses did not "adapt" this statement from paganism, but vice versa.

Termed "Catholic scholar and apologist" on the dust jacket, Scott Hahn says,

As we pray the Hail Mary, we echo one of the most ancient titles Christians have given to Mary: Mother of God (in Greek, Theotokos, literally, 'God-bearer')... With such scriptural precedent, the title 'Mother of God' went uncontested in the first centuries of the church. (Page 99, **Hail, Holy Queen: The Mother of God in the Word of God**, Doubleday, New York, 2001).

The "scriptural precedent" Hahn defined as the Egyptian Church, "Early Fathers" (e.g. Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Alexander) and then he only cites **Luke 1:43** as "Elizabeth's inspired greeting of Mary" (loc.cit.). Hahn says,

Celestine convoked the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) in order to settle the 'Mother of God' controversy (page 101, *ibid.*).

1. Scripture refers to Mary as "the mother of my Lord" and NOT "God" as Hahn claimed.
2. He calls the practices of church "Fathers" "scriptural precedent," which they are not. The Scriptures and 1st century apostles did NOT use the phrase "Mother of God" for Mary, or anyone else, for that matter.
3. Hahn's claim that the title for Mary "went uncontested" is not what encyclopedias nor Catholic history say.
  - a. "...during the first centuries of the church, no emphasis was placed on Mary whatsoever." - **Encyclopedia Britannica**, vol. 14, p. 309.
  - b. "Devotion to Our Blessed Lady...is not contained, at least explicitly, in the earlier forms of the Apostles' Creed, there is perhaps no ground for surprise if we do not meet with any clear traces of the cultus of the Blessed Virgin in the first Christian centuries." - **The Catholic Encyclopedia**, Volume 15, page 459. (This underscores the lack of history for Hahn's claim, but the lack of Scriptures to support the practice devastates it!)
  - c. The "Mary Doctrine" has been gradually added to by "Popes" [*sic*, **JTPII**]: in 1854, Pius IX pronounced the Immaculate Conception (Mary was born without sin) and it has been added that she never sinned; in 1923, Pius XI sanctioned Benedict XV's pronouncement that Mary suffered with Christ, and with Him, redeemed the human race; Pius XII officially designated Mary the "Queen of Heaven" and "Queen of the World," and in 1950, declared the bodily Assumption of Mary into Heaven. The effect is that Catholics who recite the Rosary say 10 prayers to Mary for every single prayer to God!
4. The **Catholic Encyclopedia** says: "Epiphanius, died 403 A.D., denounced certain ones of Trace, Arabia, and elsewhere, for worshipping Mary as a goddess and offering cakes at her shrine. She should be held in honour, he said, "but let no one adore Mary" (Volume 15, page 460).

## **IS IT BABY'S MANGER SCENE OR MOTHER'S SHRINE?**

The elevation of Mary to the "Mother of God" is exactly the kind of thing that Jude condemned:

These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they mouth great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit (**Jude 16-19**).

Such people are: driven by their "own lusts" and not God's Will; users of "swelling words" that are empty of truth; respecters of persons (such as Mary) "to gain advantage" for their own personal/ commercial gain; and "mockers" who abuse Scripture. One must always "remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Jude 17**), certainly those in Matthew and Luke.

## **JESUS IS "THE REASON" FOR THE REST OF OUR LIFE.**

Many idolaters who learn the differences between God and their present practices obey the Gospel. Devout Thessalonian Greeks:

... Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God (**1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; Acts 17:1-4**).

We urge all to re-examine their Scripture and souls, and give Jesus their life's "season" (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**). Our "season" begins when we believe and are baptized to be saved (**Mark 16:15-16**), and Jesus is the "reason" for it.

— **John T Polk II**

*Taken from the Gospel Gleaner, Volume 19, No. 4 (October – December 2003)*