

Spiritual Strategic Warfare



"Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place"

Ephesians 6:14

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" **Ephesians 6:15**

"above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts (arrows) of the wicked one"

Ephesians 6:16

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ..." **Ephesians 6:17.**

"For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow (bone), and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart..." **Hebrews 4.12.**

Zidkiyah Yisrael

Birthdays: Pagan (Heathen) Origin

Lets put this into a biblical perspective from the eyes of a holy God regarding the celebration of "birthdays". When looking at scripture and **studying** the word of God we see no evidence or history of any of the prophets, the disciples, or apostles partaking of any birthday celebration. The children of Israel were warned not to part take of **the ways** of the heathen nations around them. Birthdays were not part of their custom or heritage as a people. The reason given is in **Jeremiah 10:2** warning the children of Israel not to learn nor practice the traditions and customs of the "heathen". **Jeremiah 10:2** "Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven (astrology), for the heathen are dismayed at them". Jeremiah continue in the following verses explaining the custom of the people are vain. We need to ask ourselves are we following the word of God and his ways, or are we following man and his ways?

There is an affinity of such commemoration among the wicked as recorded in **The Satanic Bible (Anton Szandor LaVey, (Air) Book of Lucifer – The Enlightenment, Avon Books, 1969, Ch XI, "Religious Holidays," p. 96) regarding Birthdays:**

"The highest of all holidays in the Satanic religion is the date of one's own birthday.

This is in direct contradiction to the holy of holy days of other religions, which deify a particular god who has been created in an anthropomorphic form of their own image, thereby showing that the ego is not really buried. The Satanist feels: **'Why not really be honest and if you are going to create a god in your image, why not create that god as yourself.' Every man is a god if he chooses to recognize himself as one. So, the Satanist celebrates his own birthday as the most important holiday of the year. After all, aren't you happier about the fact that you were born than you are about the birth of someone you have never even met? Or for that matter, aside from religious holidays, why pay higher tribute to the birthday of a president or to a date in history than we do to the day we were brought into this greatest of all worlds?** Despite the fact that some of us may not have been wanted, or at least were not particularly planned, we're glad, even if no one else is, that we're here! **You should give yourself a pat on the back, buy yourself whatever you want, treat yourself like the king (or god) that you are, and generally celebrate your birthday with as much pomp and ceremony as possible."**

It is interesting that birthdays are considered the most important holiday to these Satan worshipers (the founding of their "church", called Walpurgisnacht, and Halloween are the other ones of importance to them).

Of course, early Christians did not celebrate birthdays nor did the early Jews. Nor have real Christians ever celebrated Halloween.

Origen of Alexandria, writing over two centuries after the death of Messiah follows this same line when he recorded a diatribe against the memories of birthdays, indicating that at the time of his writing, a day to remember the birth of the Messiah was not part of the church calendar. In his ***Homilies on Leviticus***, speaking on the aspect of birth, Origen states:

"...not one from all the saints is found to have celebrated a festive day or a great feast on the day of his birth. No one is found to have had joy on the day of the birth of his son or daughter. **Only sinners rejoice over this kind of birthday. For indeed we find in the Old Testament Pharaoh, king of Egypt, celebrating the day of his birth with a festival, and in the New Testament, Herod. However both of them stained the festival of his birth by shedding human blood...But the saints not only do not celebrate a festival on their birth days, but, filled with the Holy Spirit, they curse that day (after the example of Job, Jeremiah and David).**" (Barkley, *Homilies on Leviticus: 1–16 / Origen, 1990, 156.*)

What is the origin of birthday celebrations?

Birthday celebrations are actually rooted in paganism (**heathenism**).

The ***Encyclopedia Americana* (1991 edition)** states:

"The ancient world of Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Persia celebrated the birthdays of gods, kings, and nobles."

Authors Ralph and Adelin Linton reveal the underlying reason for this. In their book ***The Lore of Birthdays***, they write:

"Mesopotamia and Egypt, the cradles of civilization, were also the first lands in which men remembered and honored their birthdays. The keeping of birthday records was important in ancient times principally because a birth date was essential for the casting of a horoscope."

So, there is a direct connection between the Pagan practice of birthday celebrations and astrology (horoscopes and fortune telling).

Not surprisingly then, the ancient Jews did not celebrate birthdays, regarding them as Pagan.

Also, ***The World Book Encyclopedia* (volume 3, page 416)** states:

"The early Christians did not celebrate His [the Messiah's] birth because they considered the celebration of anyone's birth to be a pagan custom."

Down to the fourth century Christianity rejected the birthday celebration as a pagan custom.

To satiate this point, notice also the record of the first century historian Josephus: **The Jews in the Messiah's day knew The Most High attitude toward birthday celebrations, "Nay, indeed, the law does not permit us to make festivals at the births of our children"** (Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, Book II, section 26).

History of Celebration of Birthdays in the West

It is thought that **the large-scale celebration of birthdays in Europe began with the cult of Mithras, which originated in Persia but was spread by soldiers throughout the**

Roman Empire. Before this, such celebrations were not common; and, hence, **practices from other contexts such as the Saturnalia were adapted for birthdays. Because many Roman soldiers took to Mithraism, it had a wide distribution and influence throughout the empire...** (*Wikipedia. Birthdays. July 12, 2007* version).

Christmas is also relevant because December 25th was the day of celebration of the birthday of the sun-god Mithra.

The *World Book Encyclopedia* notes,

"Christmas...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. Christmas. *World Book Encyclopedia, Volume 3. 1966, pp. 408-417*).

Long ago, the average person never paid any attention whatsoever to the anniversary of their birth. The initial pattern that developed concerned the celebrating of the birthday of their deity, once each year, at the winter solstice. **This is the origin of Christmas, since the winter solstice was considered the "re-birth" or "birthday" of the solar deity (Natalis Sol Invictus, or the Nativity of Sol, the unconquerable).** This alone marks the behavior as originating from the rebellion against The Most High, Who is the one and only Elohim of Heaven and Earth. Remember that The Most High commanded that we not learn the ways of the heathen See **Deuteronomy 12:28-32.**

Later, people began to celebrate the annual birth of their king at the same time as their deity, aligning their ruler with the same honors given to their deity. In their minds, their ruler became an anthropomorphic version of their deity. In the east, average people slowly began to celebrate their personal "birth day" once each year on what they believed to be "new year's day." Eventually, people developed the custom of observing their personal birth day on the annual day they were actually born.

Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church. 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.

In their essay titled *Birthdays, Jewishly*, Lisa Farber Miller and Sandra Widener point out that the *Encyclopedia Judaica* is very blunt on this topic:

"The celebration of birthdays is unknown in traditional Jewish ritual."

Originally, even as more and more Gentiles began to profess the Messiah (so much so that they outnumbered those of Jewish heritage that did), the early Gentile leaders also did not endorse the celebration of birthdays. No early church writer endorsed the observance of birthdays by Christians, nor are they ever listed in the early observances of the Christian church.

Therefore, the celebration of birthdays, was clearly not part of "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (**Jude 3**).

No early religious/church writing from the second century that I have seen (and I have read most that are available) seems to endorse (or even suggest) the celebration of birthdays by any who professed the Messiah.

Although he was not part of the Ecclesia of YEHOVAH God, the writings of the early third century Catholic theologian Origen of Alexandria show that, even that late, Orthodox Catholics were against the celebration of birthdays. **The *Catholic Encyclopedia* states:**

"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" (**Martindale C. Christmas, 1908**).

What about Christmas?!? As many would ask. The question to ask is where did "Christmas" come from? Does not the very term itself denote it's source -- "Christ-mass." Thus it is of Roman origin, brought over from paganism (heathenism). Christmas is the time when we commemorate the Savior's birth one would argue. My question to such a response is **WHO** authorized such commemoration? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not.

The Messiah told his disciples "remember" him in his death, but there is not a word in scripture, from Genesis to Revelation, which tells us to celebrate his birth. It is without reason that the only "birthday" commemorations mentioned in the bible are Pharaoh's (**Genesis 40:20**) and Herod's (**Matthew 14:6**)? Is this recorded "for our learning?"

According to King Solomon, he tells us that a man's death is better than one's birth. **Ecclesiastes 7:1** "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth".

Look at **Jeremiah 7:18** "The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead *their* dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven (The fertility Goddess), and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger".

All the ancient Gods of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome had birthdays! All other nations around them adopted these same traditions and customs.

In ancient Greece **the Greeks made round cakes to honor Artemis, the goddess of the moon and the goddess of hunt**. The cake was decorated with several candles to represent the glow of the moon. They also believed that the smoke from the lit candles carried their prayers and wishes to their Gods who lived in the sky. Today many cultures place candles on a cake out of tradition according to one's age. For those who were superstitious, making a silent wish and blowing out the candles on a cake made someone hope their wish come true.

From reading and studying the scriptures you will learn that Satan does everything opposite of what God the Most High does. God want his true people to **worship him in spirit and truth** (**John 4:24**) not according to a lie. He want us to partake of his holy days and feast instead of Satan's holidays that has nothing to do with the Holy God of the bible. We will all have to give an account of what we do when we stand before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who will judge each and every one of us. Remember what the prophet Elijah said to the prophets of Baal (Another god who had birthdays!) **1 King 18:21** "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How **long halt ye between two opinions?** if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word". **What it means to halt between two opinions**. The word "**halt**" in our text is important. It means to be undecided as if to hop back and forth from one opinion to the other. To be undecided about who the true God is, to be spiritually crippled.

Many **professing Christians** today are also halting between two opinions. They pretend to worship the God of the Bible, but they also worship the gods of the heathen at the same time. Like Israel in the bible, they don't realize that God is displeased and angry with them. He doesn't accept the worship of those who practice idolatry and polytheism (worship of many gods). Instead of pleasing God, their worship is a sin. Instead of reaping God's blessings, they will reap His judgment and His curse.

People have a natural tendency to form opinions in their own imaginations about who or what God is, rather than learning about God from the Bible, which is His Holy Word.

People who claim they know God and understand His will (and so on), yet they have never read or studied His Word, are only fooling themselves. The fact is all they really know about God is what they make up in their own depraved hearts and minds. Most people would be totally surprised if they would take the time to read the Bible. They would find God to be entirely different than what they imagined Him to be. And this includes many **professing Christians**, who never read or study their Bibles!

Here are some examples of who God is according to the holy scriptures!

God is the living God (**Jeremiah 10:10**). In fact, He is life (**John 1:4**), and He is the Creator and Giver of all life (**Acts 17:25**).

2. **God is a Holy God** (**Isaiah 6:3, 57:15; 1 Peter 1:16**). There is no sin or imperfection in Him (**Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5**).

3. **God is omnipotent**, or all-powerful (**Jeremiah 32:17, 27; Matthew 19:26; Revelation 1:8**). There is nothing that He cannot do. He is limited only by His own Holy nature and perfect will.

4. **God is omniscient**, or **all knowing** (**Isaiah 40:28**). He knows everything there is to know about everything and everyone. He knows every thought and every motive of the hearts of men.

5. **God is omnipresent**. He is everywhere present at the same time (**Psalms 139:7-9**) therefore He is infinite.

6. **God is eternal** (**Psalms 90:2**). He had no beginning and shall have no end, therefore He is unaffected by time.

7. **God never changes** (**Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8**) he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, therefore His promises and His judgments never fail.

8. **God is sovereign over all** (**Psalms 115:3; Daniel 4:35**). He works all things after the council of His own will (**Ephesians 1:11**). None can prevent His work or thwart His will. He is sovereign over the salvation of sinners and the eternal destinies of the souls of all men (**John 6:37-40, 44, 65**).

9. **God is able to save the souls of men** (**Hebrews 7:25**). He is able to give salvation and eternal life to as many as He shall call (**Acts 2:39**); to as many as repent and believe the gospel of His Son (**Mark 1:15**).

10. **God will judge the souls of men** (**Hebrews 9:27**). All men will stand before Him in judgment on the appointed day. The lost will give an account of their sins and be sentenced to eternal punishment at the Great White Throne judgment (**Revelation 20:11-15**), while the saved will give account of their works and receive or lose rewards accordingly at the judgment seat of Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:10**).