

New Years Celebration

How should one deal with a situation like this?

A discussion with church members & a couple elders when the following point is raised:

I hope we are not planning to evangelise with a message about New Years being “bad” ...

People like the celebration, no one knows about any bad origins, and “positive” messages are

more important & more effective at being accepted by the general public



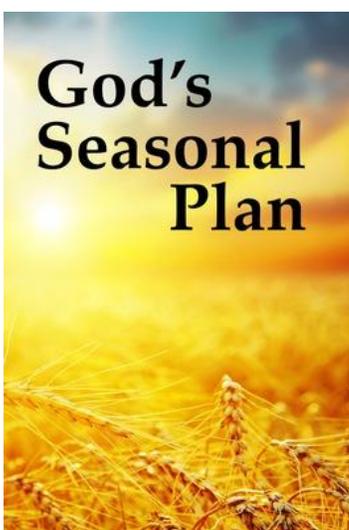
My immediate thoughts ...

- “yikes!” The Church of God has condemned New Years celebrations since the days of Herbert Armstrong
- The above approach is “wrong” ... We need to strive to adapt our behaviour to God’s Truth ... Not to ignore truth to keep a celebration.
- **Act 17:11** These (*Bereans*) were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and **searched the Scriptures daily** to find out whether these things were so.
- In the Church of God we are rightly “quick” to condemn Xmas celebrations ... It is ironic to see that every argument to justify keeping New Years are the same arguments used to justify keeping Xmas!

Last year, I spoke on the pagan origins of Christmas and how we might evangelize by “asking questions” (Socratic Dialogue) to guide people into more logical critical thinking.

This year, I hope we can explore the Facts about New Years Celebrations (as explained in Church of God publications) ... to see why we should condemn these observances.

CGI Materials...



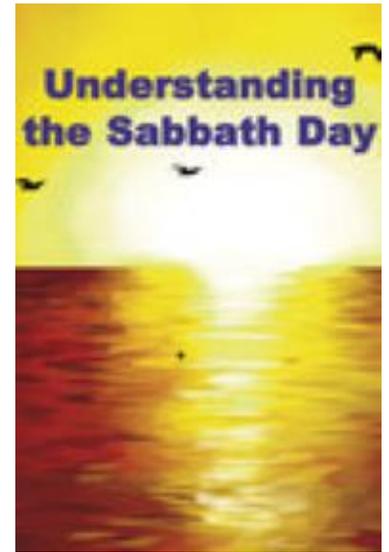
Booklet - **GOD'S SEASONAL PLAN**

"These three—Christmas, Easter, and Halloween—are probably the most important among “Christian” holidays. Then there is “Valentine’s Day,” also rooted in paganism, with connections to Nimrod, and other days, like “**New Year’s**” day, in the middle of a dead winter; “Groundhog Day,” and many, many more. Among them all, only “Thanksgiving” stands out as a celebration one may safely assume God endorses."

Booklet - UNDERSTANDING THE SABBATH DAY

"What does it mean when it says this ruling system shall “think to **change the times**”? Here are three examples:

- God begins His year in the spring, but this ruling system prophesied in Daniel 7:25 starts its **new year** in the dead of winter.
- God begins His months at the new moon, but this ruling system begins its months at any time regardless of any lunar observation.
- God begins His day around sunset, but this ruling system begins its day in the middle of the night.



Horane Blog - <https://cgicanada.org/blog/2019-dont-bet-on-it/>

"The fact is New Year's resolutions have a religious origin, but not from the Christian religion, as many people assume. Some 4,000 years ago, Babylonians made promises to their gods at the start of each year in March; they would also return borrowed objects and pay their debts. They were the first to hold celebrations to honour the New Year. This occurred during a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, when they crowned and reaffirmed loyalty to the reigning king.



About 46 BC, there was a similar practice in Rome, after Emperor Julius Caesar changed the calendar and established January 1, as the beginning of the New Year. They named the celebrations after Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit allegedly inhabited doorways and arches. Romans believed Janus looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, so they offered sacrifices and made promises or resolutions of good conduct for the coming year. Christians adopted January 1 celebrations much later.

Horane Blog - <https://cgicanada.org/blog/before-the-resolution/>

Nowadays, everyone, secular and the religious, makes resolutions alike. Recent **research** shows while as many as 45 percent of people normally make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals.

Before you make that resolution, please bear in mind this is just a ritual, which does not belong in Christianity given its pagan origins, and is almost doomed to failure. The fact is, as a Christian, we must continue to uphold the promises we made to God at baptism i.e. to serve Him faithfully and seek endure to the end so we may inherit the promise of eternal life that YAHWEH made to us.

Each year, at the Passover, not Easter, which is just another of those pagan-rooted festival that traditional Christianity “baptizes” and calls it Christian, we renew our commitment to God for sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to die for the sins of the world.

When does God's New Year begin? After all, what New Year can begin in January when everything is frozen? The beginning of a New Year should suggest newness; God does that because His New Year begins in the spring when everything is starting anew.

Exodus 12: 2 “This month (Nisan/Abib) shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you.” **Esther 3:7,**” In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus...”

Our society is so steep in pagan traditions that we often forget anything that pertains to what God wants us to do or to observe. Unfortunately, what He often requires of us to do, such as observing His Holy Days of **Lev. 23, we** turned a blind eye to, and instead embrace willingly, pagan-rooted days that have nothing to do with the God of the Bible – YAHWEH. Before you make that resolution for the calendar year (and that is what it is), think about exactly what you are doing and why.

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Note : No Sermons, No Armor of God programs, No Booklets or Articles, No STP mention of New Years!

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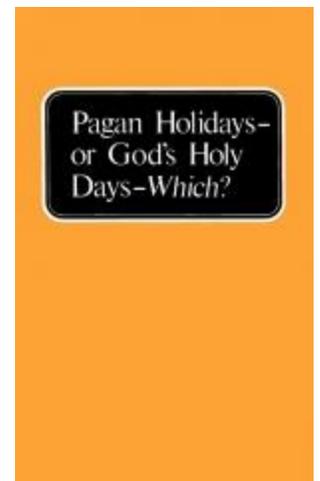
Old WCG ...

HWA Booklet - Pagan Holidays—or God's Holy Days—Which?

<https://www.hwalibrary.com/cgi-bin/get/hwa.cgi?action=getbklet&InfoID=1326294480>

Pagan Origins

Ancient Rome's **pagan** holidays have been chained upon a heedless and deceived world. These include certain annual holidays — Christmas, **New Year's**, Easter, as well as many more, every one a pagan day — every one used to stimulate the sale of merchandise in the commercial markets. Upon honest investigation, the earnest seeker after truth learns that these days are all of heathen origin and pagan significance. He learns that he can have no part in them.



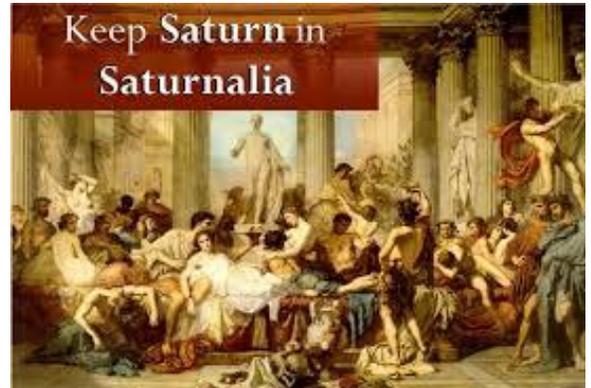
Plain Truth Article Dec 1964 - William H Ellis - The Truth About NEW YEAR'S!

<https://www.hwalibrary.com/cgi-bin/get/hwa.cgi?action=getmagazine&InfoID=1401189166>

- New Year's is one of the oldest and most universal of all pagan traditions! The custom of celebrating it has remained essentially unchanged for 4,000 years! "There is scarcely a people, ancient or modern, savage or civilized," writes Theodor H. Gaster, in his definitive book New Year, "which has not observed it... in one form or another.
- In ancient Babylon, New Year's festivals were closely bound to the pagan feast called "Christmas" today.
- "**Mesopotamia**," writes Earl W. Count, "is the very ancient Mother of Civilization. **Christmas** began there, over **four thousand years** ago, as the festival which renewed the world for another year. The '**twelve days**' of **Christmas**; the bright fires and probably the Yule log; the giving of presents; the carnivals with their floats, their merrymakings and

clownings, the mummers who sing and play from house to house; the feasting; the church processions with their lights and song — all these and more began there centuries before Christ was born. And they celebrated the **arrival of a new year!**" (4000 Years of Christmas, pp. 20-21) That is how it began. *The celebration of New Year's began in ancient Babylonia in Mesopotamia. It was a pagan custom of ancient sun-worship 2000 years before the birth of Jesus.*

- The **celebration of New Year's is never once commanded in the Bible.** Jesus and the apostles never observed it. Moses forbade it! Don't say "it doesn't matter." It **does matter** to God whether we adopt the customs of the heathen. Your Bible says, **"Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jeremiah 10:2).**
- The New Year's festivities that had originated in Babylon found their way to Greece and finally to Rome. The Romans called it "**Saturnalia**" — in honor of Saturn. Among them it was extremely popular — a time of **revelings, drinking bouts, orgies — finally ending in HUMAN SACRIFICE!** "The first day of the Saturnalia shifted during the lifetime of Rome... it began around the **middle of December... and continued until January first.** In its midst was December twenty-fifth, the day, as the Romans calculated, when the sun was at its lowest ebb...." (E.W. Count's 4000 Years of Christmas, page 28)
- **Today**, New Year's Eve has become a time for people to wallow in excesses of liquor! The modern attitude seems to be, "have a **wild time** on New Year's Eve, and turn over a new leaf on New Year's Day!" New Year's resolutions are empty and meaningless, usually trifling matters of jest! Few people make a lasting change. Most people seem to have convinced themselves that **God is out of the picture for good.** That God is not concerned with their modern revelings, drunken parties, and promiscuous behavior!



- "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying 'How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.' Thou shalt not do so unto the Eternal thy God: for every abomination to the Eternal, which He hateth, have they done to their gods...." (Deut. 12:30-31)



- Theodor H. Gaster writes concerning the familiar "New Year's babe": "Actually the New Year babe is far older than he looks. In **ancient Greece**, it was customary at the great festival of Dionysus to parade a babe cradled in a winnowing basket. This was taken to **symbolize the annual (or periodic) rebirth** of that god as the **spirit of fertility!**" (New Year) Who was this Dionysus? None other than Bacchus — the **god of wine!**



- "Father Time"

Another symbol of New Year's celebrations is equally pagan! It is the familiar figure of a white-haired man carrying a scythe. What does he represent? The ancient Greek god Cronos. It is from the name "Cronos" we derive our "chronograph" which measures time. Among the Greek gods, Cronos originally cut a swath of human sacrifice with his sharpened scythe! The "silent reaper" anciently "reaped" little children in horrible episodes of mythical cannibalism! This Greek rite of human sacrifice was adopted by ancient Rome, where human sacrifice was practiced at least until 300 A.D. No wonder God Almighty warns the pagan New Year's celebration is an abomination to Him! See Deuteronomy 12:31.

Modern Paganism Will Be Punished!

Do you suppose God has changed His mind about compromising with paganism?

"For I am the Lord, I change not!" warns the Eternal in Malachi 3:6. This same reminder is repeated in Hebrews 13:8.

Speaking to the modern nations of Israel today, Almighty God says, "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Eternal God; Go ye, serve ye everyone his idols and thereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts and with your idols" (Ezek. 20:39).

In other words, God is saying, "Be pagan if you insist; but quit calling it Christian."

God continues to warn modern Israel against the holidays of paganism, in

Hosea 2:11: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days [days the people chose], her new moons [marking the beginning of the pagan New Year], and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." Notice that these were Israel's feast days — those Israel had acquired from the pagan nations around them — not those God had originally instituted through His Bible! "And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them..." (verse 13)!



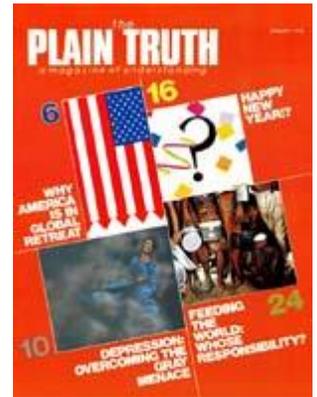
The very same punishment awaits any nation today that forsakes God's law as revealed in His Holy Bible, and turns to the customs of pagan nations — observing pagan days of worship!

Does it make any difference if you continue observing pagan customs — like New Year's? It certainly does! God says so!

Plain Truth Article Jan 1978 - David Jon Hill - HAPPY NEW YEAR!?

— <https://www.hwalibrary.com/cgi-bin/get/hwa.cgi?action=getmagazine&InfoID=1346240491>

- Most New Years find their origin in some religion. Since mankind has been an observer and worshiper of sun, moon and stars from time immemorial, and since those celestial objects are the keys to our calendar and to time, it is only natural that priests of one sort or another would be involved in setting up New Years. The most popular time of year chosen by myriad pagans from ancient days has been the **winter solstice**. Worshiping the sun as their main deity, they naturally regarded the **lengthening days of late December** (which means "tenth month") as a sure sign that **their sun-god had been born anew** and therefore a New Year had begun.



Church of God groups concur! (...the traditional CoG teaching that New Year's is Pagan!)

UCG

- Article - <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/are-new-year-celebrations-pagan-in-origin>
- Sermon (45 min) - <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/new-years-q-and-a>
- Video (3 min) - <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-daily/new-years-celebration>

LCG

- Article - <https://www.tomorrowworld.org/magazines/2000/november-december/what-is-hidden-by-the-holidays>
- Article - <https://www.tomorrowworld.org/commentary/the-two-faces-of-new-year-celebrations-0>

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Sometimes we need to be different ... and be an example

Joh 16:2 They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.

2Cor 6:17 Therefore "COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE SEPARATE, SAYS THE LORD. DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN, AND I WILL RECEIVE YOU."

As discussed last year ... This is not a time to call out people for being "PAGAN" & not as righteous as "we are" ...

It's a time to ask questions to help people **think** about ...

- why they do what they do? Is there a better way to live?

Jos 24:14 "Now therefore, **fear the LORD, serve** Him in **sincerity and in truth**, and **put away** the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD!"

Jos 24:15 And if it **seems evil** to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."