

Keep Christmas Pure

Introduction:

●U.S. History of Christmas

1. The Puritans (a Protestant group from England) banned Christmas because of its connection to p_____
2. Christmas became a federal holiday in _____

●Origin of Christmas

1. An alternative to a pagan festival
 - a. Saturnalia – a Roman holiday where businesses were closed for one w_____ beginning Dec 17th involving F_____, exchanging small c_____ figurines, and masters serving their s_____
 - b. Mithraism – at the end of Saturnalia (Dec 25th) the god of the regenerating sun called, Mithra, was honored.
 - 1) Roman pagans believed Mithra to be r_____ every year on Dec 25th
 - 2) In 274 A.D. Mithraism became the official r_____ of the Roman Empire
 - c. In 313 A.D. the Roman Emperor, Constantine ended Christian p_____ giving all freedom of religion.
 - 1) Businesses were still closed for Saturnalia as pagans celebrated the rebirth of the s_____ god, Mithra.
 - 2) Christians were forced to do no business as well and so the Roman church decided that Christians should celebrate the birth of the S_____ of God at this time.
2. Christmas became an annual celebration by _____ A.D. (writings of Chrysostom tell us this).
 - a. Originally, Christians kept Christmas p_____
 - b. As time progressed, Christians began bringing various p_____ rituals into Christmas.

●How can you keep your Christmas pure?

Remember the Reason for the Season

- #### ●The celebration of God giving us the greatest gift ever, H_____
1. God became a h_____ - Jesus is fully God (Jn 1:1) and fully human (1Tim 2:5)
 2. As we celebrate Christmas remember that Jesus is:
 - a. The one who k_____ our hearts and minds (Rev 2:23).
 - b. The gift g_____ (Rom 6:23)

- The competing figure to Christ in Christmas is S_____
 1. Developed from a real person named Saint N_____ who lived in the 300's A.D.
 2. After St. Nicholas died, c_____ developed in various parts of the world to worship him.
 3. English and American p_____ began ascribing divine characteristics to him.
 4. By the late 1700's, he became known in England and America as Santa Clause.

Remember the Significance of the Symbols

- Some erroneously insist that whatever pagans practiced, Christians should not practice.
 1. Pagans practiced feasting – should we not feast? (God established several Jewish feasts).
 2. Pagans practiced singing – should we not sing? (Matt 26:30)
 3. Pagans practice gift giving, marriage, walking, talking, etc.
- We just need to avoid practices that h_____ a pagan god.
 1. Mistletoe – believed to hold magical powers of f_____ - rituals done to tap into this power like kissing under it.
 2. Yule log – a completion of the c_____ of the seasons which the sun god brings. The log was burned to honor the sun god.
 3. The Christmas tree – cannot be traced to pagan practices as many propose (its origin came from a popular p_____ in the 1400's called Paradise Tree and its sequel The Wooden Pyramid).
- Christmas symbols
 1. The Christmas tree – recalls the sin of eating the forbidden fruit and barring all from the tree of l_____ until Jesus came (Rev 2:7).
 2. Wreaths – the crown of t_____ which was forced onto Jesus's head before He was crucified (Matt 27:29)
 3. Bells, lights, candles – a g_____ sense of celebration
 4. Candy cane – represents the shepherd's s_____ (Lk 2:8)
 5. Star – One led the m_____ to worship Jesus (Matt 2:9)
 6. Gifts – reminder of God giving us His Son (Jn 3:16) which should motivate us to be characterized as g_____ (2Cor 9:7)