THE "CULTURAL" DATING OF CHRISTMAS

Request: "Could you explain what year Dec.25 became associated with the birth of Jesus Christ?"

During the next two weeks, we will study the dating of the birth of Jesus Christ.

- **Dec.16**   **Cultural Christmas Date**
- Dec.23   Biblical Christmas Date

The English word Christmas is a compound word (Christ and mass). It consists of the Greek word Christos and the Latin word missa. The word Christmas became universally identified with the birth of Jesus Christ.

This lesson will study five aspects of how December 25 became the Cultural Christmas Date.

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1. **The birth of Jesus Christ is the basis for the Anno Domini system of dating.**

    - (Anno Domini is Medieval Latin for "in the year of the Lord" or AD).

    - AD began with a monk named Dioysius Exiguus in 525AD.

    - It was accepted universally by the Gregorian calendar.

    - Modern historians have determined that the birth of Jesus Christ occurred between 7 – 2 BC.

    - There has been a successful effort to change the AD dating in history associated with the birth of Jesus Christ in the USA to Common or Current Era (C.E).

    - In 2007, the World Almanac switched to C.E after 138 years of AD usage.

2. **Many biblical historians believe Dec.25 was chosen to coincide with the winter solstice that the ancient Romans celebrated on Dec.25. Isaac Newton believed it.**

    - "A winter festival was the most popular festival of the year in many cultures. The festival was placed on the date of the solstice because this was on this day that the Sun reversed its southward retreat and proved itself to be 'unconquered.'" (Wikipedia)

    - As a client nation, the USA accepted Christmas and Dec.25 as a cultural holiday.

    - While Christmas and Dec.25 are recognized by almost every nation of the world, they are not necessarily celebrated by the vast majority of their population. In USA, the vast majority of the population celebrates it.

3. **"The earliest references to the celebration of the nativity on Dec.25 are found in chronography of 354, on an illuminated manuscript compiled in Rome in 354." (Wikipedia)**

    - "In the East, early Christians celebrated the birth of Christ as part of **Epiphany** (Jan.6), although this festival focused on the baptism of Jesus." (Wikipedia)

- Some Christians celebrated Christmas on or near Jan.7 because of the Julian calendar.

- "During the reformation some Protestants condemned Christmas celebration as 'trappings of papery and the rags of the beast." (Wikipedia)

4. **"In colonial America, the Puritans of New England disapproved of Christmas. Its celebration was outlawed in Boston from 1659-1681." (Wikipedia)**

- "Charles Dickens book, A Christmas Carol, published in 1843, played a major role in reinventing Christmas as a holiday emphasizing family, good will, and compassion as opposed to communal celebration and hedonistic excess." (Wikipedia)

- In America, interest in Christmas was revived in the 1820's by short stories of Washington Irving which appear in his 'The Sketch of Geoffrey Crayon' and 'Old Christmas,' and by Clement Clarke Moore's 1822 poem, 'A visit from St.Nicholas,' popularly known by its first line, 'Twas the night before Christmas.' (Wikipedia)

- "Christmas was declared a US federal holiday in 1820 and signed into law by President Ulysses S. Grant." (Wikipedia)

- 188 years later we are in a cultural war in USA regarding Christmas as the birth of Jesus Christ.

5. **Paul referred to the birth of Jesus Christ in human history as "when (hotan) [historical] the fullness of time (to pleroma) came (erchomai / a.a.ind)" in Gal.4:4.**

- **How?**   "God sent His son, born of a woman, born under the Law." (Gal.4:4)

- **When?**   "In order that (hina) [divine purpose] He might redeem (exagorazo / a.a.subj) those who were under the Law, that (hina) [divine purpose] we might receive (apolambano / a.a.subj) the adoption as sons." (Gal.4:5)

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