

Should a Christian Keep New Year's?

In the Church of God back in the early 1990's, during the time when "the faith once delivered" was under severe attack, and the waters of the truth of God were being severely and purposely diluted and muddied among the brethren, we used to have Spokesman Club meetings every week during the winter months.

For those of you who may not be familiar with Spokesman Club, it was a church-based speech training club, similar in format to the well-known Toastmasters Club.

During one meeting that was memorable to me and which took place about this time of year, in the "table-topics" session, the "topics-master" asked the following question:

**We all know that Christmas is wrong. But what about New Year's?
Is it okay for God's people to participate in New Years celebrations?**

I cannot remember all of the members' responses; but I *do* remember that this topic generated a surprising amount of discussion and debate, and that some members seemed to believe that it *is*, in fact, okay for God's people to participate in New Year's celebrations.

What about *you*?

In God's church today *thirty* long years later, as the Roman year 2022 ticks over to 2023, do *you* think it's okay?

And if not, *why* not?

But if you *do* think it's okay, what do you base your belief on?

As the majority of people in our western nations are observing this holiday at this time, let *us* dig into this topical subject today.

Let's ask and answer the question: ***Should a true Christian participate in New Year's celebrations?***

The History of New Year's

First of all, what is the *history* of New Year's?

There is a surprising amount of confusion about this – yes, even in God’s church.

But also, in the same way, out in "the world," there has historically been much confusion regarding the calendar ... and even *more* confusion about when the *beginning* of the year should fall.

For some reason, both in and out of God’s church, calendars and New Year dates have historically been topics for much disagreement.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, even the ancient Mesopotamians could not agree amongst themselves on when the New Year should fall:

The earliest-known record of a New Year’s festival dates from about 2000 BC in Mesopotamia, where the New Year (Akiu) commenced with *the new moon* nearest the spring equinox in *Babylonia*, or the nearest to the autumn equinox in *Assyria*.

So, right out of the starting gate, we have *two* possibilities. And *two* disagreements.

It seems that there is so much confusion – likely spawned by Satan – that even the modern *encyclopedias* can’t agree with each other on this thorny subject!

The Encyclopedia Americana moves the oldest New Year festival from Mesopotamia to Egypt; and moves it *back* in time another 800 years earlier than the Britannica estimate:

Among ancient peoples the beginning of the year was determined by one of various events, such as the spring *or* autumnal equinox, *or* the winter *or* summer solstice. {Now we have four possibilities!}

In Egypt, for example, beginning about 2773 BC, the year began with the rising of *Sirius* {the brightest star in the night sky}, which coincided with the start of the flood period of the Nile and came not long after *the summer solstice*.

Now we have *five* possibilities for disagreement!

To confuse the issue even more, the ancient Phoenicians and Persians began *their* new year with the *autumn equinox*; and the Greeks – up until the 5th Century BC – observed *their* new year with the *winter solstice*.

The Greeks' timing should be familiar with us, because it basically agrees with what most of our modern western nations do – based on the winter solstice. We will come back to this shortly.

What about the Romans?

From around 700 BC, the ancient Romans began their year *near* the spring equinox on March 15 -- the infamous “Ides of March” -- and divided their year up into ten *named* and two *un-named* months -- so bequeathing us the names that we use for some of *our* months today.

Their ten named months were Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, and December. The last six names were taken from the words for five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten.

As far as we know, the Romans first adopted the January 1st date as New Year's Day in 153 BC, when two Roman consuls agreed to choose that date for political and/or military purposes.

However, in 525 AD, for most European countries, New Year's Day was moved back to the month of March, when a *Catholic monk* by the name of Dionysius Exiguus set the start of the so-called "Julian Calendar" at March 25th, which was erroneously calculated to be the date of the Spring Equinox; but was also exactly *nine months before December 25th*, which was also erroneously calculated to be the date of the Winter Solstice.

Why the change?

To celebrate the *supposed* date upon which it was revealed to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God. We know that December 25th as the date they gave as Jesus' birthday was greatly in error; and therefore, this March 25th date for the “the Annunciation,” as they call it, was also gravely in error.

This confusion continued throughout the Middle Ages, during which a variety of professing-Christian feast dates were used to mark the New Year, while calendars often continued to display the months from January to December in the Roman fashion.

Hence even more confusion!

With the introduction of the "Gregorian Calendar" in 1582, many European Roman Catholic countries again began to celebrate New Year's Day on January 1st.

Many more countries adopted the January 1st date during the later 16th and 17th Centuries. Others held out until the 18th Century. Surprisingly, Britain and its colonies (including what would later become the United States and Canada) were among the very *latest* to adopt January 1st as the New Year date. That was in 1752.

One might assume that time and education would have diminished this confusion; but it certainly has *not!*

Because of the many differences of opinion regarding the calendar, various countries still hold their New Year's celebrations at different times. The Vietnamese, the Islamic states, the Japanese, the Tamils, the Thais and, of course, the Chinese, all keep totally different New Year dates as their preference.

How is it observed today?

But let's get back to our discussion of the *western world's* January 1st New Year's Day. How is it observed by the western world today?

Traditionally, going all the way back to Roman times, just like Christmas (the Roman Saturnalia), New Year's Day was observed as a *religious* feast,

But in modern times, rather than being a *spiritual* celebration, the arrival of the New Year has also become an occasion for what one magazine called a "*spirited* celebration," with such activities as wild parties, "Polar Bear" swims in frigid waters, and the making of personal resolutions.

Other New Year traditions are certainly less mentionable and less acceptable -- God's Word accurately describing some of the goings-on at *some* New Year's celebrations, where *some* choose to let their hair down excessively and throw all moral inhibitions to the wind:

Galatians 5:

19: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20: Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21a: Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like:...

I am *not* saying, of course, that *all* of these things go on at *every* single New Year's party; but it *does* happen. Now, as Paul's epistle continues, here comes God's stern warning about this kind of activity:

21b: ...of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Although this scripture does *not* specifically target Christmas and New Year activities, many of the sins described here *are*, in *some* circles, somewhat common to the season, as it has long been known that the whole Christmas and New Year period spawns more immorality, violence -- and even *murder* -- than *any* other time of year.

According to reports from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Safety Council, there are more alcohol-related traffic deaths that occur on the New Year's holiday than *any* other day of the year. Also that New Year's is statistically worse than even Christmas in that regard.

In the British Commonwealth countries, including Canada, many of the New Year's customs, such as unrestrained immoral revelry, partying and excessive drinking – have been adopted from the *Scottish* New Year, which the Scots call "*Hogmanay*."

Not that the Scots are any more sinful than the rest of us, of course; but the *roots* of Hogmanay go back to the celebration of the Winter Solstice among their Norse ancestors, also incorporating customs that come from the Gaelic winter celebrations of Samhain, a very wicked, ancient pagan festival.

The Vikings celebrated *Yule*, which later contributed to the tradition of "the Twelve Days of Christmas," or the "*Daft* Days," as they were sometimes called in Scotland. "*Daft*" being a British term that means "*silly*" – and *silliness* just about sums up the Christmas and New Year's celebrations. Some Church of God brethren actually call it "*the silly season*." But perhaps that term is way too mild!

In mainland Europe, even earlier Winter Solstice observances evolved into the ancient celebration of Saturnalia, a major Roman winter festival, in which the people celebrated completely free of any moral restraint or inhibition.

During the time of the Protestant Reformation and the Puritan years in England (under Oliver Cromwell) and Europe, these winter festivals were recognized as being pagan and were forced underground by the Protestant churches of those times. But they soon crept back in again and re-emerged near the end of the 17th Century.

What does God think about it?

What does the Lord God say about all this heathenism, unrestrained revelry and confusion?

I Corinthians 14:

33: For God is *not* the author of confusion, but of *peace*, as in all churches of the saints ...

Verse 40: Let all things be done decently and in order.

We will read more later on what God thinks about His peoples' adoption of these heathen ways; but for now, let us ask the question, *when* is the *true* New Year, according to the LORD God?

Here is the first scriptural mention of a New Year's Day – a very significant day:

Genesis 8:

13: And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, *in the first month, the first day of the month*, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry.

And, just in case its timing had been lost between Noah's time and the latter days of Israel's captivity in Egypt, the LORD God gave them a clear reminder:

Exodus 12:

**1: And the LORD spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying,
2: "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."**

You cannot get clearer than that!

This first month of the year was initially called "Abib" (Strong's 24), a word which stems from a verb that means "to be tender."

Some meanings of the noun "Abib" are *green, greenness, the green ears of a crop, growing green, fresh heads of grain, ear-forming, and young ears of grain.*

The first mention of the word "Abib" is *this* one – three chapters earlier -- from the time of God's hail plague on Egypt:

Exodus 9:31:

And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the *barley* {Hebrew: *sehorah*} was *in the ear* {*abib*}, and the flax was *bolled* (*in bud*).

This gives a very approximate marker as to the time of year being mentioned for this particular plague. But, because of its proximity – technically part of North Africa –

Egypt's climate was (and still is) *hotter* than that of Canaan. This resulted in Egypt's growing seasons coming somewhat *earlier* than in Canaan. Although for this particular study, this fact is not really relevant, it is still one worth remembering.

The first mention of the word "Abib" as the name of the *first month* is given in:

Exodus 13:

3: And Moses said unto the people, "Remember this day, in which you came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

4: This day came you out *in the month Abib.*"

In two other scriptures, the first month of God's sacred year is called "*Nisan*" – a word which means "*their flight*" -- probably a reference to the month during which the Israelites *fled* Egypt.

God clearly commands us to *observe* this month of Abib (or Nisan); and He tells us *exactly how we should* observe it:

Deuteronomy 16:1:

Observe *the month of Abib*, and keep the Passover unto the LORD your God: for *in the month of Abib* the LORD your God brought you forth out of Egypt by night

We are to begin counting God's sacred year on the first day of Abib. We are to follow it up on the tenth day of the month by "beholding the Lamb" (Exodus 12:3-5; John 1:29, 36). On the fourteenth day of Abib we are to keep our Lord's Passover. On the fifteenth to the twenty-first days of Abib we are to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

(Note: Although the term "Passover" has become a catch-all term for the whole eight-day season, the context of this verse in Deuteronomy 16 shows that it is more accurately referring to the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Abib 15 to 21 -- during which time God brought the Israelites out of Egypt) rather than the Passover Day (Abib 14) itself).

There was also *another* hugely significant and symbolic event that took place on God's New Year's Day:

Exodus 40:17:

And it came to pass *in the first month* in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

A Second New Year's Day?

Is there -- or was there -- as the Jews believe and teach, a *second* New Year's Day?

Although unsubstantiated, it was the opinion of the Jewish historian Josephus and some other ancient and modern Bible scholars that, *before* God's command in Exodus 12:1-2, the commonly-accepted New Year's Day (by the Israelites of that time) *may* have been the first day of what would later become God's *seventh* month, the Feast of Trumpets, which comes in the autumn, exactly six months after Abib 1.

According to the Jews, what is considered to be the "civil year" begins on the seventh month of the "Sacred Year." This seventh month is commonly called "Tishri" or "Tisri," meaning "*beginning*." But the word does *not* appear *anywhere* in the holy scriptures!

In just one scripture, from the time of Solomon, which records the entrance of the Ark of the Covenant into the new stone temple, this seventh month is called "*Ethanim*," which means "*enduring*" or "*ever-flowing*":

I Kings 8:2:

And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the month *Ethanim*, which is the seventh month.

Please note that *Ethanim* is clearly referred to here as "the *seventh* month" ... *NOT* the first! The Jews' attempt to make it so is another example of their departure from God's holy written Word!

Giving the benefit of the doubt to the Jews, however, there *is* a possibility that they *might* have been mis-guided by a mis-reading of these two scriptures:

Exodus 23:16:

And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of your labours, which you have sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labours out of the field.

The Hebrew for "in the end of the year" here is "B'tzet ha Shanah" -- literally meaning "at the going out of the year."

Exodus 34:22:

And you shall observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

In this verse, the Hebrew words translated "at the year's end" are "T'qufat ha Shanah" meaning "a revolution or course or lapse of the year."

In both of these scriptures, from their context, it is obvious and logical that "*the year*" being referred to is the *agricultural* year or season.

"The Feast of Ingathering" refers, collectively, of course, to what we now call the "the Fall Festivals," all of which are celebrated in God's seventh month: the Feast of Trumpets on the 1st, the Day of Atonement on the 10th, the Feast of Tabernacles from the 15th to the 21st, and the Last Great Day on the 22nd.

These days marked the end of the annual Holy Day season -- as well as the end of the main, annual, agricultural "year" or "season" for the Israelites' main summer crops.

By the time of the arrival of the Feast of Trumpets, the many agriculturally-employed Israelites would have prepared their first and second tithes, and their holy day offerings for the year.

On the Day of Atonement, the LORD had instructed them to begin counting the third tithe year, the seven-year agricultural cycle, by which they were to let the agricultural land rest, the "Year of Release" cycle, and the fifty year "Jubilee" cycle.

The Israelites needed a logical starting point for all these cycles which their loving God put in place in the scriptures for their benefit.

A more detailed discussion of these cycles must be deferred for today -- as it would take up the time of at least one whole sermon.

As mentioned earlier, some scholars – including the well-known Jewish historian, Josephus, have opined that, in "the original order of the months" (as Josephus puts it), the year began with Tishri 1, before God changed it in Exodus 12.

But if God's Holy Days were in effect all of the way from creation, as many – including me -- believe they were, then perhaps the LORD's command to Moses in Exodus 12 was actually *restating* – rather than *initiating* – Abib 1 as His sacred New Year's Day to the Israelites, who had been in Egypt for four hundred years.

Perhaps, in a similar way as He found it necessary to *remind* the Israelites to "*remember* the Sabbath Day" in Exodus 16 and 20, there is also a possibility that He had to re-set the calendar for them, as well.

Rosh Hashaneh

Let's take a look at one "beginning of the year" verse that might confuse this issue for some:

Ezekiel 40:1:

In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, *in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of the LORD was upon me, and brought me there.*

The event itself is not important to this sermon; but the actual *timing* of it is.

The phrase "in the beginning of the year" is translated from the Hebrew words, "rosh" (which means "head" or "beginning") and "ha shaneh" (which means "the year").

The modern Jews have adopted this verse for their term for the Feast of Trumpets -- "Rosh Hashanah."

However, if it actually refers to the year's beginning in the *springtime* -- as I believe that it *does* -- then this event would have taken place on the 10th day of *God's first month* -- the day on which the Passover lamb was chosen and examined.

The Origin of Confusion and Deception

Revelation 12:9a:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world ...

Part of Satan's role as *arch-deceiver* is that he is also the great *counterfeiter*.

It is important that we remember this, because everything is not as it appears. *His* bogus calendars and New Year's Days are some of his most confusing counterfeits. The one that he has foisted upon the modern-day western nations of Israel is one of his *greatest* counterfeits.

Notice how he timed it! God's *true* New Year's Day comes in March or April -- in the beauty of the *springtime* of the year (in the northern hemisphere). But when Satan planned *his* counterfeit New Year, he obviously wanted to keep it as far away as possible from God's holy days and from God's *true* New Year's Day.

“As far away as possible” translates to half-way between the Last Great Day of one year and the Passover of the next – or three months between the two -- the winter solstice also falling halfway between the autumn equinox and the spring equinox.

Satan seems to have set his New Year as far as possible outside of and away from God’s Holy Day season as he could; in the tenth month of God’s year!

What Should we DO with this Knowledge?

We have looked at the facts and some history regarding New Year’s days; but what should God’s people *do* with this information?

Here is the short answer, directly from the mouth of Jesus – speaking to Satan:

Matthew 4:3:

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall *not* live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

So, from our Lord Jesus, this is *exactly* what we are to do. We are *not* to live by man’s heathen, Satan-inspired traditions! We are to live by God’s Word – “by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” – including *this* warning that God spoke through ancient Israel through Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 10:

2: Hear the word which the LORD speaks unto you, O house of Israel: Thus says the LORD, “Learn *not* the way of the heathen, and be *not* dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

3a: For the customs of the people are vain ... {Hebrew hebel: empty, unsatisfactory, transitory}.”

This warning was given *six hundred years* before Jesus walked the earth and said those things to Satan (as recorded in Matthew 4:3). Let’s go back even further – *eight hundred or so years earlier* – than Jeremiah. The LORD had sternly warned the Israelites about these same things far earlier than Jeremiah's time:

Leviticus 18:

1: And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying,

2: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, 'I am the LORD your God.

3a: After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, shall you *not* do...

We read earlier that one of the estimates of the earliest heathen New Year's days was that of *Egypt*.

3b: ... and after the doings of the land of *Canaan*, whither I bring you, shall you *not* do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances.

4: You shall do *my* judgments, and keep *my* ordinances, to walk therein: *I* am the LORD your God.

5: You shall therefore keep *my* statutes, and *my* judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: *I* am the LORD'" ...

If we *do* God's statutes and His judgments and if we *live* in them, they will bring us a better and happier life – even a better *quality* of life.

Verse 24: Defile *not* you yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are *defiled* which I cast out before you...

The word "*defile*" means "*pollute*" or "*dirty*."

25: And the land is *defiled* {*polluted and dirtied*}: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself *vomits* out her inhabitants.

26: You shall therefore keep *my* statutes and *my* judgments, and shall *not* commit *any* of these abominations; neither *any* of your own nation, nor *any* stranger that sojourns among you ...

Obviously, there were Israelites who were doing these things, as well as any resident Gentiles who may have remained among their territories.

27: (For all these *abominations* have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the *land* is *defiled* {*polluted and dirtied*};

28: That the land spew *not* you out also, when you *defile* it, as it spewed out the nations that were before you.

29: For whosoever shall commit *any* of these *abominations*, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people ...

This is a strong warning!

30: Therefore shall you keep *my* ordinance, that you commit *not* *any* one of these *abominable* customs, which were committed before you, and that you *defile* *not* yourselves therein: *I* am the LORD your God.

Did the ancient Israelites *heed* God's loving and merciful warnings here?

No, they did *not!* They *initially* gave them some lip-service; but soon came to ignore them. They rebelled against them and were punished.

Perhaps surprisingly, their rebellion is recorded in the book of Psalms, which we often look at as just a series of lovely words. But, just look at what is being said *here*:

Psalms 106:

34: They did *not* destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

35: But were *mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.*

36: And they *served their idols: which were a snare unto them...*

39: Thus were they *defiled* with their own works, and went a-whoring with their own inventions...

What was the result?

40: Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against His people, insomuch that He *abhorred His own inheritance ...*

If we think about God's people as the *affianced Bride of Jesus Christ*, He *divorced* them. If we think about them as *the begotten but as yet unborn children of God the Father*, He *aborted* them -- and cast them off from His inheritance.

41: And He gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

42: Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

They went into slavery; and even worse than that, into a terrible scattering.

Our modern Israelitish nations today are doing *exactly* the same thing as did their forefathers! They are ignoring God's loving and merciful warnings that were given for their – and *our* – benefit. And once again, the same kind of punishment is coming, in the form of captivity and repression, both of which appear to be coming upon our rebellious nations – even now! If you are watching world news, you will know that this is gradually sneaking up on us already. For so many years our people have been duped by Satan into keeping these false traditions of our heathen enemies!

Here is what Jesus said. Yes, He was talking about the traditions of the backsliding Jewish elders; but generally, He is talking about *all* false traditions:

Mark 7:6:

He answered and said unto them, "Well has *Esaias* {*Isaiah*} prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me'...

Not even a week ago, millions of people who normally would not even *mention* Jesus' name -- unless they were using it in *blasphemous profanity* -- were keeping something that they call their "Christ-mass" -- thus "honouring Him with their lips."

7: Howbeit *in vain* do they worship me, teaching for doctrines *the commandments of men*.

8a: For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold *the tradition of men*"

...

The traditions that Jesus is talking about here were the bogus "traditions of the elders," which were unscriptural additions to God's holy laws – including some twisting of God's calendar – and which, as the years went by, they twisted even more!

But whether these traditions were originated by wayward Israelites or by heathen Gentiles., God says that we are *not* to add or subtract from His holy Word. If it is *not* according to His law and His testimony, He tells us, it is not of God and must be rejected (Isaiah 8:16-20).

God is the *only* One who has the authority to set or to change the calendar, the New Year and the order of the months. He inspired Daniel to write these words:

Daniel 2:

20: Daniel answered and said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His:

21: And *He changes the times and the seasons: He removes kings, and sets up kings: He gives wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.*

Only *God* has the power and authority to do so. If *He* wants to change the times, the seasons or the New Year's Day, then it is up to *Him* to do so. He does not take kindly to puny men trying to usurp His authority – even (perhaps especially!) men as relatively, humanly great as the end-time "*Beast*" will be. It is prophesied that this *Beast* will take to himself the power to change the calendar around for his own benefit:

Daniel 7:

23: Thus he said, "The fourth *beast* shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces...

25: And he {this fourth Beast-king} shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."

This Beast-king will be inspired by Satan the devil, and he will have the effrontery to change times and laws. With Satan's rebellious influence, he will try to usurp the authority from God to be able to do this. Thankfully, the power of this king and his kingdom will be short-lived and he will quickly have his dominion and his power torn away from him. He will fall and be consumed – destroyed! – along with his “partner-in-crime” – the False Prophet (also named "the Great Whore" and "Babylon the Great").

This just shows how *serious* this kind of thing really is! It is *not* a *light* thing, although we might tend to think that New Year's Day is nothing much to be concerned about. Such sins as this one will eventually lead the world into the frighteningly-horrific end-times. It will be just one aspect of the Beast's rebellion and one part of the way of life foisted on the world by him and the False Prophet:

Revelation 18:

1: And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2: And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3: For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies."

The false prophet is symbolized here by a spiritually immoral woman.

And yes, *all* nations – the *whole* world – *all* have been deceived by Satan (Revelation 12:9). The *whole* world, as we read in many other scriptures, is going to *love and worship* the Beast. The *whole* world will commit spiritual fornication with Babylon the Great.

So *we* – God's people – must be on our guard. We don't know when it is going to be; but in the days, months and years to come, Satan is going to give his power to the Beast-king and to Babylon the Great, in order to exert a last-ditch effort to deceive *God's very elect*.

We could be getting an initial part of this deception right now with the false New Year, the false calendar and the pressures that have been put on us and our young people to observe the heathen celebrations of Christmas and New Year's.

Who knows if and when Satan, the Beast and the False Prophet are going to change the times and seasons even *more*? Maybe they will come up with some other, newly-concocted, very convincing and enticing "times" or celebrations.

What we *do* know, however, is that God is going to boom out *this* warning from heaven ... still in Revelation 18:

4: And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "Come out of her, my people, that you be not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues."

Jesus is here telling us about *future* events. But if you think about it, God is also booming out a stern, advance warning to God's people right *now* -- through many other scriptures in His holy Word.

What then is the answer?

The answer is that we must *come out!* And we must *stay out!*

In His final prayer on the night before He died, Jesus prayed that His Father wouldn't actual take His faithful people out of *the world*, literally; but that He would keep us from its evil -- and the counterfeits and deceptions of its "evil *one*"!

We must firmly reject Satan's counterfeit times, dates, calendar and holidays.

We are to conscientiously endeavour to discover and observe only *God's* times, dates, calendar and holy days.

We are to observe *God's* New Year's Day!

John Plunkett
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2022-12-31

