

Keep in mind, these are just the new lights that are entering the market each year. The number of holiday lights already in use, is many times higher than that number. So why does the celebration of Christmas involve so many lights and candles?

The answer to that question is darker than we might like to believe.

Christmas gets the rituals associated with lights and candles from the Saturnalia (festival in honor of Saturn), the Sol Invictus (birth day of the sun) and the Kalends (New Year).

Macrobius tells us that candles at the Saturnalia were given in lieu of human sacrifice. "... and set up a shrine to Dis and an altar to Saturn, whose holiday they called Saturnalia. And though they long believed that they were appeasing Dis with human heads and Saturn with men as victims, because of the oracle's words, ...and heads to Hades, and send a man [phôta] to the father, they say that Hercules, returning through Italy with Geryon's cattle, persuaded their descendants to replace those ill-omened sacrifices with favorable ones, offering to Dis not human heads but masks with skillfully fashioned human faces and honoring Saturn's altar not by slaughtering a man but by kindling lights—for phôta means not only 'man' but also 'lights':hence the custom of exchanging candles during the Saturnalia."~ Macrobius by Robert A. Kaster

This quote tells us that the pagans were at one time sacrificing people to Saturn.

Later, rather than sacrificing a human, they would instead offer up lights or candles to Saturn. The use of fire at the Kalends appears to have begin as bonfires as we see in this next quote.

"The day (as indeed the whole month) was specially consecrated to Janus the God of new beginnings. ... Janus was greeted at daybreak. ... great bonfires were kindled to celebrate the

occasion..." ~Texts and studies, contributions to Biblical and patristic literature

The use of bonfires may have later been reduced to the use of the yule log, through the incorporation of other rituals from other pagan holy days. The merging and changing of pagan holidays has been a common theme throughout history. The yule log remains a part of Christmas and the holiday season for some, but it has been replaced in large part by the much more popular candle. As we saw above, the month of January was "consecrated to Janus the God of new beginnings". This is because January is the first month of the pagan year. Note this is not the first month of the Biblical year, which is the month of Nissan, and which usually falls in March or April on the Gregorian calendar (See Exo 12:2 & Est 3:7). The first month of the pagan year was connected to the winter solstice. This is an important event for those who worship the sun. The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. This was an important event in antiquity. It meant longer days were coming. Society was agriculturally

based and as a result, people were much more in tune with the seasons. They had to grow enough food in the summer to sustain them and their livestock through the winter. Life in the winter was much harder and more uncomfortable for them. They saw the longer days after the winter solstice as a reason to celebrate, and they credited their pagan god, Sol (sun) with giving them this additional light. The Chronography of 354 shows us that the pagans celebrated this renewal of light, and the coming of the new year as the "Birthday of the Unconquerable Sun" on December 25th. This is because the winter solstice occurs on or about this date in the Northern Hemisphere. The actual date of the winter solstice changes over time. However, the date of celebration has been static on the 25th of December since at least the middle of the fourth century.

Bonfires, yule logs and candles have been part of the pagan way of life for a very long time. They have nothing to do with the Christian walk. How incredibly sad that our Lord and Savior, the Light of the world, has become associated with the winter solstice, the darkest day of the year. We have need of one light and that is the Lamb of God. ***Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*** There is much more on this topic on the website.

# Candles, Lights and Lanterns

Lights, lights and more lights. What is with all of those lights? In the U.S.A., there isn't a time of the year more "lit up" than Christmas time. There are artificial lights placed on most houses, and even many public buildings and roadways are aglow with lighted decorations for the holiday season. Candles are customary at this time of year, as decorations and as gifts. According to the United States Census Bureau, the value of candle shipments in 2008 was \$1.2 Billion. According to Candle Industry Facts by M. J. Abadie, 35% of candle sales take place during the Christmas season.

Abadie goes on to state: "Candle shipments increase substantially during the third quarter of the year because of the seasonal nature of candle sales during the end-of-year holiday celebrations (Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa), since candles play a large role at this time of year — they are used for religious purposes, and as gifts and decorations." According to the Federal Register, reporting on a proposed rule by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there are an estimated 100 million holiday light strands imported each year, with a value of about \$500 million.

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## Christmas Lights



**This informational pamphlet gives the reader a basic understanding of the history behind Christmas candles and lights.**

