

Something in the air. This year. It's death, destruction, negativity — everywhere, all at once. I suppose a proper winter solstice. The Christmas season wasn't always celebrated as a happy-go-lucky holiday, with family, gift-giving, and comfort. It used to instill fear, panic, violence, debauchery in the streets, and deep existential anxiety. People would engage in behavior similar to what we now see in *'The Purge'* films. Slaves would rule over their masters. Krampus was removed from the Santa myth. It wasn't until around 1850 that the first imagery of the classic Santa we recognize began to appear. In 1930, Coca-Cola rebranded Santa into the form we recognize today. Christmas only promoted positivity after this. But people remember the dark, the cold. Early human cultures starved or died in winter, back when humanity had no organized society.

What we celebrate as Christmas today is not how Christmas was experienced even a century ago — let alone two centuries ago, or before Christianity, or before recorded history itself. What we now frame as warmth, generosity, and innocence sits atop a much older tradition that relied on fear, punishment, ritual control, and very real consequences — especially for children. Modern Christmas didn't evolve naturally. It was **domesticated**. To understand that, you have to follow the timeline of history — not just backward through Christianity, but through how the holiday was used at different points in time, before Christianity was even conceived.

In the modern era — roughly post-1930 — Christmas has largely been a consumer ritual wrapped in Christian pseudo-mythology. Standout features are:

- A benevolent, cartoonish Santa Claus.
- Gift-giving framed as moral reward.
- Childhood innocence as a selling point.
- Emotional nostalgia engineered through repetition.

Fear is largely gone. Punishment is symbolic at best. The worst consequence is coal — as a joke, not as intentional threat. This update version number of Christmas exists because industrial society can afford to. Childhood became protected. Hunger was less visible — not, gone, just not *"as visible."* Death moved out of the home and into institutions. The holiday softened because society was projecting this softening. But this update version number is **historically new**.

A century ago, Christmas still carried moral weight. Santa wasn't just a mascot — he was a **behavioral auditor** of sorts. *"Be good or else"* wasn't playful language. It was reinforcement. Parents didn't hesitate to weaponize Santa as surveillance. Obedience was expected. Disobedience carried shame. Children were not emotionally insulated. They were disciplined through fear, guilt, and consequence. Christmas functioned as a **moral checkpoint** — not a celebration of innocence, but a test of compliance.

~185–225 Years Ago (1800–1840): Punishment Was the Point

Go back further and the holiday gets darker. From 1800-1840 punishment was still the point. In Europe, Christmas folklore still carried its original teeth. This is where **Saint Nicholas splits into multiple figures** — not all benevolent. Yes, Saint Nicholas existed — a 4th-century bishop known for secret gift-giving. But folklore doesn't preserve saints cleanly. It fractures them. Saint Nicholas became:

- **Sinterklaas** in the Netherlands
- **Father Christmas** in England
- **Knecht Ruprecht** in Germany
- **Pelznickel, Belsnickel**, and other punitive companions

And most importantly:

Krampus... Krampus was not a joke.

He was a horned, bestial figure who accompanied Saint Nicholas — not to reward children, but to **punish or remove** them. Bad children weren't simply denied gifts. They were beaten, dragged away, or eaten depending on the regional story. This wasn't metaphor. This was **behavioral terror** used deliberately to enforce obedience. Children disappeared in real life — they still do — but back then, famine, disease, abandonment, and/or exploitation were common. Folklore didn't invent that fear; it reflected it.

Orphans, Hunger, and the Utility of Fear

Christmas horror folklore didn't exist in a vacuum. Before modern welfare systems, orphans were common. Poor children were liabilities. Some were sold. Some were abandoned. Some simply vanished. Stories of children being taken by winter spirits, demons, or monsters functioned as **warnings**, not fantasies. Don't wander. Don't disobey. Don't stray from the group — or you may not come back. This is where figures like the **Pied Piper** emerge — not as whimsical fairy tales, but as symbols for mass child loss. The Piper doesn't just lure children away. **He removes them from society entirely.**

Whether interpreted literally or symbolically, the message was the same:

Children were expendable when systems fail.

Christmas folklore absorbed this reality instead of denying it.

Before Christianity: Winter Was Death — History Ignores This.

Long before Santa, before Christ, before Rome — winter itself was the horror. The winter solstice marked the period when people died most frequently. Food shortages. Cold. Darkness. Isolation. Celebrations weren't joyful — they were **protective rituals** meant to appease forces people couldn't control or even understand. Sacrifice, inversion, and fear were built into them. This is where **Saturnalia**, Yule, and solstice rites originate. The goal wasn't happiness. It was survival. Christianity didn't erase any of this.

If you have been paying attention to my writings this might sound familiar. Christianity did not erase this history. It copied, modified, recombined, amplified, and saturated, what has already been out there. Christianity just rebranded it and claimed it as its own.

As Christianity merged with Roman authority under Constantine, December rituals were absorbed and reframed. But institutions don't just adopt symbols — they **police them**. Saint Nicholas becomes canonized. Folk terror becomes unorthodox. Krampus survives only in the margins. Over time, the Church sanitized what it could control and pushed the rest into folklore — where it could be dismissed as superstition, and later as conspiracy theory territory, rather than authority. This is where rumors and associations emerge — Templars, Vatican Knights, Freemasonry — not because of some hidden Santa conspiracy, but because **symbol control has always belonged to power structures.**

- Who watches?
- Who judges?
- Who rewards?
- Who punishes?

Santa didn't invent surveillance; he inherited it.

What Santa Really Is...

Santa Claus is not a single figure. He is a **combination of**:

- **Saint Nicholas of Myra** (*secret gift-giver*)
- **Father Christmas** (*English Green Man / Wild Man variant*)
- **Sinterklaas** (*Dutch source of modern Santa*)
- **Sol Invictus / Mithras** (*Unconquered Sun, Dec 25 birth*)
- **Saturn / Kronos** (*Saturnalia, time, sacrifice*)
- **Krampus** (*Santa's Partner and Santa itself in other folk stories*)
- **Knecht Ruprecht** (*German Krampus*)
- **Belsnickel / Pelznickel** (*German gift-giver*)

Santa and the Knights Templar

There are also lesser-discussed but strange links between the Santa Claus figure and the Knights Templar — not as a literal lineage, but as a symbolic one. Saint Nicholas was not just a gift-giver; he was a protector, enforcer, and moral authority figure. Over time, stories emerged tying him to militant Christian orders, including claims of Nicholas as a patron saint of soldiers and, in some traditions, an archetype of the righteous knight. This archetype embodies sanctioned authority, moral judgment, and disciplined enforcement in service of a higher ideal. It is not merely benevolent; it is tasked with protecting order, rewarding virtue, correcting wrongdoing, and acting as an agent of justice rather than personal compassion. Loyalty, obedience, and moral alignment matter more than individual circumstance. In this role, righteousness is defined by adherence to an accepted code — not by empathy alone. Whether or not these associations are historically provable matters less than the role they served: Santa as a sanctioned moral authority, operating above the household, below God, and adjacent to Church authority — a figure who watches, judges, and rewards within an organized belief system.

Santa, Children, and Freemasons

There is also a darker, more uncomfortable thread running through Christmas imagery aimed specifically at children — one that overlaps repeatedly with Freemasonic symbolism, ritualized instruction, and memory programming. Songs like *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, first printed in *Mirth Without Mischief* (1780), function less like innocent nursery rhymes and more like mnemonic exercises — repetitive, cumulative, and anonymous by design. Early illustrations of Saint Nicholas and Santa frequently depict objects and postures associated with initiation: blindfolds, staffs, pinecones, animals, passageways, and figures guiding children away from their parents under the promise of safety, reward, or adventure. The Santa Claus figure is **depicted in dark or black attire**, but **not consistently**, and **not as a formal Freemasonic uniform**. Whether expressed through moral tales, allegory, or seasonal tradition, the pattern is consistent — children are led, tested, observed, and shaped through symbolic ritual long before they are capable of questioning the structure itself.

This does not require a single hidden hand to be effective. It only requires symbols that work — and repetition.

All serve the same function as Santa Claus.

- He knows if you've been bad or good.
- He enters your home without permission.
- He judges children morally.
- He rewards compliance.
- The fact that he's now smiling doesn't change the function.
- It just makes it more accepting.

Why the Horror Was Removed?

Modern society doesn't tolerate overt child terror anymore — and rightly so. So, the edges were filed down. Krampus was turned into kitsch. Punishment became symbolic. Surveillance became playful. But the **structure remained**.

Present-day Christmas still teaches:

- Watch yourself.
- Perform goodness.
- Obey expectations.
- Receive reward.

The horror didn't vanish. It was made safe enough to sell.

Christmas is treated as sacred, immutable, and ancient — as if it arrived fully formed, sealed, and delivered straight from divine intent. But when you actually strip away sentiment and examine the historical record, what we call Christmas today is not a single-origin tradition. It is a layered construct. A ritual hybrid. A carefully assembled holiday built on top of older systems that already existed long before Christianity ever attempted to assign meaning to December 25th.

- This isn't mockery.
- It isn't anti-faith.
- It's math.
- It's probability.
- It's history.
- It's how folktales evolve into divinity.

There is no factual documentation — biblical, Roman, or otherwise — that places the birth of Jesus on December 25th. None. No gospel specifies a date. What *does* exist are **theological traditions, symbolic calculations, and later religious decisions** that *associate* Jesus with that date — none of which qualify as contemporaneous historical documentation.

1. Late Church Tradition (3rd–4th Century CE).
2. Theological Calculation (Not History).

3. Alignment With Existing Roman Festivals.

The Gospels:

- **Do not give a date.**
- **Do not give a season.**
- Contain details that **likely contradict a December birth.**

Examples often cited as proof:

- Shepherds watching flocks at night (*unlikely in Judean winter*).
- Roman census logistics (*improbable during winter travel*).

Even conservative biblical scholars admit:

The Gospels do not allow a precise dating of Jesus' birth.

Jesus being born on December 25th was mostly made up or written around to be included to validate the Church's claim that Christmas and Jesus' birth are one in the same. They are clearly not and never were. We just accepted it as truth. Makes me wonder if Rome is really dead? Our world society has absorbed many of its traditions and governing principles. Early Christians did not celebrate birthdays at all. The idea of marking Christ's birth as a holiday came centuries later, after Christianity stopped being a persecuted sect and became an institutional religion aligned with Roman power. So, if Jesus wasn't born on December 25th, the obvious question becomes:

Why that date?

The answer has nothing to do with Bethlehem — and everything to do with Rome.

Before Christianity: Why December Already Mattered?

Long before Christianity reared its ugly head into our perception, late December was already one of the most symbolically important periods of the year. **The winter solstice** — the shortest day and longest night — was **existentially significant** to pre-industrial societies. Food was scarce. Cold was lethal. Light mattered more than faith. The return of longer days wasn't poetic symbolism; it was survival confirmation. Cultures across Europe marked this moment with festivals tied to renewal, inversion, and endurance. In Rome, this took the form of **Saturnalia**.

Saturnalia: Ritualized Chaos

Saturnalia was celebrated from roughly December 17th through the 23rd and honored Saturn, the god of agriculture and time. During Saturnalia:

- Social hierarchies were temporarily inverted.
- Masters served slaves.
- Gambling was permitted.
- Excess, feasting, and gift-giving were encouraged.

- In some cases, “**Purge-like**” excursions were briefly sanctioned outbreaks of disorder and anonymity, where normal legal and social restraints were intentionally relaxed.

This wasn't random decadence. It was a **pressure-release ritual**. A controlled period of disorder meant to reaffirm order once it ended. After Saturnalia, Roman society snapped back into place — refreshed, re-legitimized, and reinforced. Makes you wonder where the idea for the *Purge* movies came from? Gift-giving during Saturnalia wasn't about generosity. It was about obligation and participation. Refusing to engage marked you as socially deviant. **That matters later.**

Sol Invictus: The Unconquered Sun

By the 3rd century CE, another December celebration rose in popularity: **Dies Natalis Solis Invicti** — *the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun* — celebrated on December 25th. Sol Invictus symbolized the Sun's victory over darkness. After the solstice, daylight begins to return. The symbolism writes itself:

- Light overcomes darkness.
- Life persists through death.
- Order triumphs over chaos.

Sound familiar?

By the time Christianity began spreading across the Roman Empire, December was already saturated with purpose and meaning. People didn't need convincing that this time of year mattered — they already believed it did. Long before any idea of Jesus was even conceived. Christianity's challenge wasn't to invent significance. It was to reshape it and **redirect it**.

Early Christianity and the Absence of a Birthdate

The earliest Christians were not concerned with Jesus' birth. They focused on his death and resurrection. Birthdays were seen as pagan traditions — self-centered, even vulgar. There was no theological urgency to assign Christ a birthdate. That changed when Christianity stopped being marginal. When Emperor **Constantine** legalized Christianity in the early 4th century, the religion transitioned from persecuted belief system to imperial tool. And imperial tools require structure, uniformity, and calendars. Christian leaders now faced a practical problem:

How do you convert a population deeply attached to existing celebrations without causing instability and more panic than the fear of missing these celebrations? The answer was not elimination. It was **absorption**.

So, Why December 25th Was Chosen?

December 25th was not chosen because of historical evidence. It was chosen because it already worked. By aligning Christ's birth with Sol Invictus, Christianity could:

- Replace Sun worship with Son worship. (*same word, different spelling and inferred meaning*)
- Preserve familiar rituals while changing their narrative.
- Reframe existing celebrations as Christian without forcing behavioral change.

This was not deception. It was governance. Constantine's Rome didn't want cultural shock. It wanted continuity under a new banner. The symbolism was clean, efficient, and politically effective. Light returns. The savior is born. Darkness retreats. Once formalized, the date hardened. What began as pragmatic alignment slowly transformed into perceived divine timing. Over generations, the origin disappeared behind repetition. And repetition is how myths solidify. Add corrupted power and control, and it doesn't matter what you celebrate and why, **simply that you do.**

Traditions That Were Never Christian — Until They Were

Many elements now considered “**Christmas traditions**” predate Christianity entirely. **Evergreen trees** symbolized life that persisted through winter. Germanic and Norse cultures used them long before Christian theology touched Europe. The tree's survival during the cold months represented resilience, not salvation. Christianity didn't invent the Christmas tree. It rebranded it. **The power of light**, candles, fires, and later electric lights all trace back to solstice symbolism. Light mattered because it was scarce. Darkness was cold and dangerous. **Again: survival first.** God later, if at all. **The practice of feasting and gift-giving** in the form of Saturnalia already established feasting and gift exchange as social obligations. Christianity didn't create generosity — it inherited the expectation and moralized it as against God if you didn't participate. Over time, participation became synonymous with goodness. Non-participation became suspicious. Sound familiar?

What Christmas Actually Is:

Christmas, as practiced today, is not a historical commemoration of a documented event. It is a **ritual stack**:

- Pagan solstice symbolism.
- Roman social engineering.
- Christian theological overlay.
- Modern consumer acceleration.

None of these layers cancel the others out. They coexist and work together. This doesn't make Christmas ‘fake,’ or ‘a lie.’ It makes it **constructed**. And that distinction matters. Because when people defend Christmas as timeless truth, they're defending a narrative that never existed in isolation. What they are actually protecting is continuity — emotional, cultural, and psychological continuity. Which is understandable. And nothing in this process of Christmas is inherently bad or evil. Humans always celebrated late December because they wanted to live, they wanted to be happy. What they did back in those days that transitioned into what we celebrate today was born out of fear of the dark, the cold, and hunger. Death was treated like it is today by most. Fearful and sad — but also from the hope of light returning, crops growing, rain falling, and life continuing. These rituals were attempts to bring peace, love, and happiness into the coming cycle, to remind the people that winter was not permanent and that survival itself was worth celebrating. Long before calendars marked January 1st as a new year, people already understood renewal by watching the Sun, the land, and the seasons. Understanding something or even anything, does not require pretending it came from somewhere it didn't.

Why This Makes People Uncomfortable?

This history unsettles people not because it attacks belief — but because it exposes **mechanism**. Christmas feels sacred because it has been reinforced for centuries. Ritual repetition creates emotional certainty. Questioning the structure feels like questioning the meaning people attach to it. But meaning doesn't evaporate when origins are examined. It just becomes conscious. And conscious participation is far more

honest than inherited obedience. Christmas is not what most people think it is — but it is exactly what history shows it to be. A carefully layered holiday built from older traditions, repurposed through Roman pragmatism, institutionalized through Christianity, and refined through centuries of repetition.

The Ritual of Christmas is older than its own story. There's something deeply unsettling about how confidently we celebrate holiday though. Not unsettling in a cartoon-villain sense. Not sinister in a Candice Owens conspiracy-laced podcast, but unsettling in the quieter, more human sense — the kind that comes from realizing a thing you were taught to treat as sacred is actually a composite object. Halted, duplicated, reassembled, layered, included in every mythos related to Christianity, and sanded smooth over centuries until its seams that pointed at its original origins disappeared. **Christmas is not fake.** This distinction matters. It's far more interesting — and far more uncomfortable — than that. What we call Christmas is ritualized inheritance. A convergence point. A cultural reimagining where older beliefs were not erased, but overwritten just enough to redirect behavior, allegiance, and meaning. And what makes this difficult to confront is not that it's dark or pagan or manipulative in some cartoonish way — but that it worked. Exceptionally well. Most people don't like this idea because it feels like an accusation. It isn't. It's an observation. This isn't controversial among historians. It's just inconvenient. Who wants to go through this ever year, or every few years, when a new generation questions the origins on anything, let alone Christmas.

Conversion Works Better When It Feels Familiar

The fastest way to spread a belief is not to replace rituals — it's to **rebrand them**. You don't need people to forget what they were doing. You need them to reinterpret *why* they're doing it while maintaining they are actually doing it. A feast becomes a holy day. A sun god becomes the "*light of the world*." A ritual of survival becomes a story of salvation. The structure remains. The narrative changes.

- The tree didn't disappear. It was baptized.
- The feast didn't vanish. It was reframed.
- The timing didn't change. It was justified retroactively.

Over time, the origin story hardened. What began as adaptation became belief and belief became law. Eventually, questioning the date felt like questioning the faith itself — even though the faith never depended on that date to begin with. This is where the discomfort creeps in. Once you see this pattern, you start noticing how little of Christmas is actually tethered to the event it claims to commemorate.

The Child, the Story, and the Silence

None of this negates the figure of Jesus. That's important to say plainly. The absence of a birthdate does not invalidate a life, a philosophy, or a belief system. But it does reveal something about how institutions operate once belief becomes infrastructure. The nativity narrative — shepherds, stars, wise men — functions symbolically, not chronologically. It's theological storytelling, not journalistic reporting, scientific research or even fact-checking of any kind. And that's fine, until it's treated as **literal history** rather than mythic framing. The problem isn't belief. It's **unexamined inheritance**. We are very good at repeating stories, although never accurately, but the repeating phase we excel at. We are less good at asking where they came from, or why this version survived while others didn't. And Christmas, more than almost any other holiday, demonstrates how easily meaning can be layered until the original context becomes irrelevant, which it sort of has. Most don't ask, or care as long as the day and date matter. Ask someone, anyone, why December 25th matters, and you'll get answers that sound certain — but collapse under even mild logical scrutiny.

- Ask why trees are involved.

- Why gifts are exchanged.
- Why light is emphasized.
- Why generosity peaks and then vanishes on December 26th.

The answers grow thinner the deeper you go. This doesn't make people stupid. It makes them human.

Ritual Without Awareness Is Still a Ritual

The darker aspect of Christmas isn't Paganism or Capitalism or Christianity. It's **automation**. Rituals work whether you understand them or not. That's their power. They shape behavior first and meaning second. When repeated often enough, they feel inevitable — as if they emerged naturally rather than being carefully assembled over time.

Modern Christmas is an almost perfect algorithmic machine:

- Emotional priming through nostalgia.
- Behavioral compliance through social expectation.
- Moral framing through religious symbolism.
- Economic acceleration through gift obligation.

And it all happens annually, predictably, with minimal resistance from most of the world. None of this requires malicious intent. Systems don't need villains — just momentum. Most people participate sincerely. They feel warmth, connection, memory, comfort, love. Those feelings are real. But the **source** of those feelings is rarely interrogated. They're attributed upward — to faith, tradition, love — rather than outward to the mechanisms that produce them from the start. **That's where things get uncomfortable.** Once one sees Christmas as a constructed tradition rather than a divine timestamp, you start noticing how easily meaning can be engineered — not just religious meaning, but cultural meaning. And that realization doesn't stop at Christmas.

Why This Still Matters

This isn't about tearing anything down. It's about understanding what you're standing inside of. Traditions don't become meaningless when their origins are exposed — but they do become optional. Conscious. Chosen rather than inherited. And that's the part people resist, because choice carries responsibility. If Christmas is a mashup of older rituals, reframed to consolidate belief and behavior, then celebrating it becomes an act of participation rather than obedience. You're no longer "*keeping tradition*." You're engaging with it knowingly. Some people will find that liberating. I know I have over the years. Others will find it destabilizing. Especially those that lost someone or multiple people they love and hold very close to their hearts around the holidays. It just stings all that much more, year in and year out. Facts don't care which reaction you prefer. December 25th is not a documented birthday. It is a symbolic convergence. A ritual anchor. A cultural compromise that worked so well it erased its own scaffolding. That doesn't make it wrong, bad or evil. It makes it effective. The world's first true algorithm. Perhaps the most unsettling part isn't that Christmas was built from older, darker, stranger ideas — but that we never stopped doing that. We just got better at hiding the seams. If there is anything worth reflecting on during a season devoted to meaning, it might be this:

Not all traditions are ancient truths. Some are very old agreements.
And agreements can be examined without being destroyed.

Almost everything about Christmas is a reimagining or remix of old Pagan rituals and pray not to Christ, but to Saturn. This Holiday is a mashup of very old rituals that predate the creation of Rome. These rituals have been also rewritten and rebranded as Christian-based over the centuries. What ultimately had to be buried wasn't paganism or folklore — it was **fear made too literal**. Krampus didn't disappear because he was inaccurate. He disappeared because modern society could no longer tolerate telling children, without irony, that if they failed to behave, they might be violently removed from their homes, separated from their families, beaten, tortured, or eaten. Not metaphorically. Not symbolically. But quite literally and physically. Permanently gone from the living Earth. That level of terror no longer fits inside a world that pretends childhood is sacred and protected — even if history shows it rarely ever was in a real sense of the concept. In earlier eras, the line between story and reality was tissue thin. Children didn't consume horror as entertainment; they lived close enough to hunger, death, and disappearance for real. The threat felt very real to them. Folk monsters didn't exist to scare for fun and games — they existed to **discipline behavior when survival itself was fragile**. Most families didn't have time to raise a child or children. When a child or children were old enough, strong enough to pick stuff up they were put to work. That is the reality of human survival.

Today, horror has been inverted. Children grow up surrounded by fictional monsters they instinctively understand as unreal. Violence is stylized. Fear is packaged. The imagination is trained to recognize horror as narrative, not consequence. Krampus, if he appears at all, is a costume. A joke. A novelty. So, he had to be sanded down. Not because he was wrong — but because he was no longer acceptable. What remains is the structure without the teeth. Reward without visible punishment. A system that no longer needs to threaten explicitly because it has learned how to guide behavior through repetition, emotion, and inheritance alone. At least when it comes to the story of Christmas.

- That's why Christmas endured.
- That's also why it will change again.
- Belief systems always do.

Christianity itself was once a disruptive reinterpretation layered over older myths. One day, it will be studied the same way, perhaps even abolished altogether — not necessarily dismissed, but contextualized as just another human story or myth. Future humanity may look back a hundred years from now, a thousand years from now, or twenty-five hundred years from now, and see Christianity as one more phase in a long lineage of meaning-making systems that are quite literally meaningless.

Maybe belief will evolve beyond that.
Maybe it will harden instead.

It's not difficult to imagine a future where faith becomes more rigid as humanity expands outward — where conformity is demanded at scale, where belief becomes identity, and identity becomes justification. History has already shown how easily gods follow power into new territories. Christmas has survived because it adapts. Because it absorbs. Because it rewrites itself without admitting it has done so.

That doesn't make it sinister.
It makes it instructive.
It makes it an algorithm.

Perhaps the most unsettling realization isn't that Christmas was built from older, darker, stranger ideas — but that it shows how easily humans can construct systems that feel eternal, benevolent, and inevitable... long before we ever called them algorithms.

The code was written in stories first.

The screens are just reading it faster — and more intently — than we are.

Maybe humans haven't forgotten that dark, cold anxiety...

The Witches of Christmas and Its Dark History

by David-Angelo Mineo

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