



History of Christmas

There are very few people in the world today who do not know what the Christmas holiday is all about. Christmas, as we know it today, is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened over 2000 years ago. The word “Christmas” translates to “Mass Of Christ”. However, we can all be sure that the celebration of the Christmas holiday did not start right away. So how did the actual celebration of the Christmas holiday begin?

Believe it or not, many of the traditions that we observe during the Christmas holiday season began way before the birth of Christ. Exchanging gifts, decorating trees, and the burning of the Yule log were all winter traditions that began before Christ was born, but were eventually incorporated into the holiday that became known as Christmas, and became part of Christmas history.

Over 4000 years ago, the Mesopotamians celebrated each new year with a 12-day festival, called Zagmuth. The Mesopotamians, who believed in many gods, held this festival in support of their chief god, Marduk, because they believed that he battled the monsters of chaos at the beginning of each winter. It is from this festival that the 12 days of Christmas is believed to have originated.

In first half IV centuries Christmas holiday has been separated from the Christening in the Roman church, under the legend at Julia's father and it began to be marked on December, 25th. Rome was in this respect followed also by all Eastern Churches. And today the majority of the countries of Europe and the USA mark Christmas on a Gregorian calendar - on December, 25th, and Russia - on юлианском - on January, 7th. And still, why we celebrate Christmas on January, 7th? After all in one of four Gospel it is not told that Jesus Christ was born this day. The Russian Orthodox Church explains unwillingness to pass to new style to that then the device of church year will be broken.

The ancient Romans held a celebration each year in honor of their god Saturn. The festival, which they called Saturnalia, began in the middle of December and lasted until the first of January. The Romans decorated their homes with garlands, as well as trees upon which they hung candles. During the festival the citizens of Rome would visit each other's homes and hold great feasts. One of the theories of how the tradition of the giving of Christmas gifts came about was from the Roman practice of exchanging gifts between family and neighbors during the festival of Saturnalia to promote good luck.