



## Who brings the gifts? - The sun and the sun gods

Towards the end of December, the days have become quite short. In some parts of the world it even doesn't get light at all. The sun has withdrawn. And then, on midwinter's day, things turn around. Starting today, the days are getting longer again, the sun is returning to the sky, bringing the light with it.

Some say the light is the sun's little child, born on midwinter. And as it is with births: one rejoices and celebrates and brings gifts. Thus it comes that the light child or sun child distributes the gifts in some places.

Also many sun gods were born at the winter solstice, for example the Roman Sol Invictus, the invincible sun. The Romans also made gifts to themselves on this occasion.

Or Mithras, an originally Iranian sun god, around whom (also in Rome) a very special secret cult was formed, which had many followers especially among the legionaries. Only when Christianity became the state religion, Mithras lost importance.

However, not completely: because even the birth of Jesus was moved over the centuries to this time, although he was probably actually born in the spring.

Whether you have a special gift-bringer, or give gifts to each other out of joy for the return of the light, giving gifts to each other at this time has a long tradition!

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