

Tuesday, December 6, 2011 – Is Christmas about the Birth of Christ?

For many members of the Lord's church, Christmas once meant decorated trees, colorfully wrapped gifts and Santa Clauses all around — but definitely no focus on the birth of Christ.

In recent years many congregations have become much more willing to reflect on the story of Jesus' birth at a time when the world is focused on him. I agree that this can be a very effective time of the year to teach The Truth about Christianity because minds tend to turn to the subject of Jesus. It is never wrong to think of His Birth, for it is the birth of our Savior. There is nothing wrong, in teaching about Christ, with starting at His Birth because it is the miraculous fulfillment of prophecy regarding Our Savior. However, celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ is not taught anywhere in the Bible. Furthermore, the Bible does not indicate when Jesus was born. The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of New Testament origin. The day of Christ's birth cannot be ascertained from the New Testament, or, indeed, from any other source. **The Bible does not authorize the religious observance of Christmas with its emphasis on the birth or nativity of Jesus Christ.**

Many religious people are adamant about “putting Christ back in Christmas” and insist that “Jesus is the Reason for the Season.” With these slogans, they hope to remind people that Christmas is a “Christian” holiday, and that without Christ, there would be no Christmas in the first place. They speak out of their own ignorance.

The so-called Christmas festival was introduced by the Roman Catholic Church in the middle of the fourth century to encourage a common religious festival for “christians” and Pagans. As such, Christmas is over three hundred years too young to be associated with the church about which we read in the New Testament. Besides its absence from the pages of inspiration, Christmas owes its origin to man and not God. God never authorized a religious observance called Christmas.

Those who conscientiously endeavor to practice book-chapter-and-verse Christianity will neither approve nor practice a religious festival not authorized by God's Word, including Christmas. We are bound to seek authority for everything we do religiously. **"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).** The expression, "in the name of the Lord Jesus" means by the authority of. There is no biblical authority for the religious observance of Christmas.

For those who, while not conforming to Christmas as a “Celebration of Christ's Birth,” feel we should take advantage of the “Reason for the Season” thought process to teach

those about Christ, we need to be sure that, as we teach, those being taught understand the need for authority in what we do. My brother, Philip, correctly reasoned regarding equating Christ's birth with Christmas by stating:

“If one grants some of these contentions, how does he then assert the need for Biblical authority on such matters as the unscriptural nature of mechanical instrumental religious music? Rather than ‘It seems to me’ should we not have a ‘thus saith the Lord’ for those matters we practice in the name of religion? Mere pragmatism has been used to countenance some fairly unsavory practices. Had the Lord wished His ‘birthday’ to be given a ‘mass’ He would have ordained it just as He did the memory of His death in the Lord’s supper. That Jehovah ordained various feasts and festivals in the Mosaic period and only specified the Lord’s supper in the new covenant ‘seems to me’ to teach us a lesson about letting the Lord designate what He wants to happen in our worship and practice. To ‘fill in the blanks’ where the Lord was silent smacks of a presumptuousness that the Lord abhors.”

Amen Philip!

There is not the slightest evidence that there is any authorization for creating a sacred celebration of the birth of Christ. There is no instruction within the New Testament to ceremonially honor the Savior's birth, and there is no indication that the Christians of the apostolic age did so.

His birth was the miraculous fulfillment of prophecy, but if he had not lived a sinless life, been completely obedient to The Father (to the point of death), and arose from the dead, His birth would not mean much.

The celebration of our remembrance of Christ has been designated for us by Jesus himself.

Luke 22:17-20 – Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”

God's Truth, as he provides it to us, is more than sufficient to convict the heart without us making up ceremonies or conforming to worldly "celebrations" to try and find an "entry point" to teach others.

For those who think that Christians should never celebrate Christmas, I believe you are wrong. Christians may celebrate the "Christmas" season in a non-religious way, with family get-togethers, the exchanging of gifts, the decoration of homes, etc. The holiday season is a long-standing tradition in this country, and for millions of people, the customary celebration exists without the cluttering of religious symbolism.

Christians ought to observe some clear distinctions between religious Christmas and secular Christmas. We should use caution regarding how and where we practice secular Christmas or otherwise enjoy our national, legal holiday.

From a purely biblical perspective, religious Christmas has no place in our religious assemblies or in our homes. Religious Christmas does not belong in our assemblies because it is not authorized! Secular Christmas does not belong in our assemblies because it is not authorized! We need to recognize as a matter of judgment the degree to which secular Christmas and national holidays may be reflected in our homes and social interaction in the family of God. Mankind is given to extremes left and right, much and little, both of which are usually contrary to the will of God.