

Heaven gave Christians the great task of declaring the Lord Jesus Christ to a world that desperately needs Him. “For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given...,” (Isaiah 9:6). If we only tell of His birth and life, we do Him a disservice. He wishes for us to tell of His will. The story is only partly told, and it risks distortion of human invention, when we do otherwise. One cannot separate the Man who gave the plan from the Plan that He gave.

Much of the religious world celebrates a special day (with dates varying according to the group) dedicated to the birth of the Savior. His birth is vitally important; but such a celebration of His birth in the absence of a “thus saith the Lord” is a well-intentioned violation of His will. Such additions find no logical end.

The Lord only authorized one celebration in all of Christianity. It is the communion (the Lord’s Supper) that memorializes His death. Considering the numerous festivals of the Jewish people, authorized by the Law and the Prophets, the singularity of this New Covenant commemoration speaks with great significance. God might easily have ordained a holy day in honor of the birth of His only begotten Son; but He did not. Perhaps this reflects His knowledge of humanity’s tendency to misplaced priorities. After all, who can but feel an emotion of warmth and compassion about a little baby in a manger? This seems innocent enough. It even seems to honor Him. Further, a little baby is much easier to agree on than the demanding Christ who requires our submission.

The Lord always operates on the principle of authorization. One should only and always do those things that Heaven reveals (Matthew 21:24). Doing anything else is acting without God’s approval or permission. His followers should never wish to act in that way which would teach or enable others to do so.

Some people will think ill of us if we do not join in the unauthorized religious festivities. Such people are under obligation to demonstrate where either Scripture teaches such a practice or that the earliest Christians, guided by the Holy Spirit, so celebrated. Neither exists. The only basis for current traditions is human custom wrongly established in the name of God’s will. There is a great difference between the two.

Do we have a good time at this season of the year? Most of us do. There is a little “magical” about so many people acting so generously and cheerfully. We can “rejoice with them that rejoice,” (Romans 12:15). We may even be able to use people’s focused attention to teach them better how to serve God. Yet we must not celebrate as a religious “holy day” that God has not ordained. It is not authorized even as a matter of option or judgment.

Rather, let us be glad and rejoice all year long that the Lord of Glory sent His Son, as is told in the Gospel accounts, to be born of a virgin, to live a perfect life, to teach a perfect way of living, and to die to afford us access into His fellowship, with a promise of Heaven to come. The true story only starts in Bethlehem. It develops in those places that He lived and preached, culminating at Calvary and triumphing in the resurrection, ascension, and presentation of His sacrifice in Heaven above (Hebrews 9:24). Let us honor Him by obedient faith.

We celebrate Jesus’ death because He wishes for us to do so. It reminds us in the most poignant way our worth to Him. It calls us to self-sacrificial dedication to our Redeemer. It reminds us of our debt of love. May we forever proclaim His death until He comes again (1st Corinthians 11:26).

Remember—you are loved. — Philip