

Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).

Although Christmas is observed and celebrated today with much zest, enthusiasm, excitement, and fanfare by people all over the world, this does not mean that it is right and acceptable to God. God is happy only when people do those things He has commanded (1 Samuel 15:22).

God has given us the Bible to be our guide in all religious matters, faith, and practice. Popular opinions and human traditions are not safe guides. Christ said, **“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”** (Matthew 15: 8, 9). In Proverbs 30:6, the Bible says, **“Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.”**

John, an apostle of Christ, wrote, **“Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son”** (2 John 9). Is Christmas in the doctrine of Christ?

We must also remember what the apostle Paul said to some Christians who were observing particular days and seasons which were not

intended for them, **“ But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have labored for you in vain”** (Galatians 4:8-11).

The basic reason for not observing Christmas or Easter or any of the other special religious “holy days” is the simple fact that the Bible, and the New Testament in particular, nowhere teaches us to do so. The Bible, God’s book of inspiration and revelation should be our guide in all religious matters, faith, and practice. We should not offer to God “holy days” and worship of human pagan origin.

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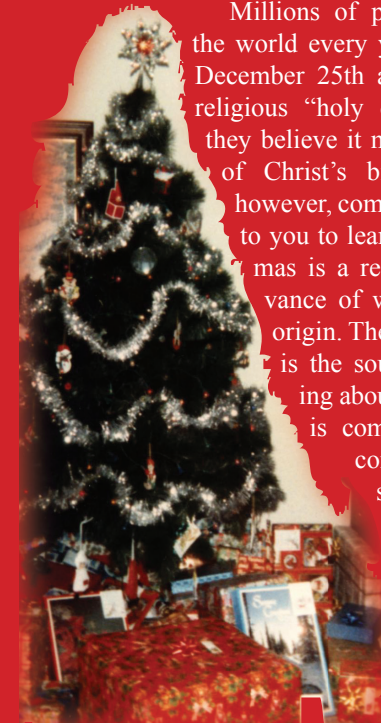
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C H R I S T M A S : *from God or Man?*

Sunny David

Millions of people around the world every year celebrate December 25th as the special religious “holy day” because they believe it marks the date of Christ’s birth. It may, however, come as a surprise to you to learn that Christmas is a religious observance of wholly human origin. The Bible, which is the source of learning about Christianity, is completely silent concerning any special festivities to commemorate the date of Christ’s birth. The observance



of Christmas did not originate in the apostolic age, and is thus without divine sanction. As a matter of fact, the word Christmas, which means “Mass of Christ”, not even once appears anywhere in the Bible!

We are living in the year of our Lord, A.D., *Anno Domini*, and the time before His birth is known as B.C., *before Christ*. All people on earth, therefore, accept and admit, advertently or inadvertently, when they write a date on any piece of paper or document that almost two thousand years ago Jesus Christ was born. Matthew, chapters 1 and 2, and Luke, chapter 2 record the *event* of Jesus’ birth, but concerning the month and the day, the Bible is silent. No command is given, and no example is found in the entire New Testament of any celebration of His birth. Inasmuch as there is neither precept nor example for its observance, faithful Christians should not keep or observe or celebrate Christmas as a religious festival.

In origin, “Christmas” is pagan. More than three hundred years after Christ was born, some believers had begun celebrating His birthday, influenced by the pagan society around them because they had been observing certain days of the year in commemoration of their gods and

goddesses. First, various days were recognized by various groups: January 6, March 18, 20, 24, April 2, 17, May 20 etc., but in A.D. 354 the Bishop of Rome declared that December 25th, a Pagan feast day which was observed throughout the Roman Empire in honor of Saturn, a Roman God of agriculture, and Brumal, “The Birthday of the Unconquered Sun,” should be observed by Christians in honor of Christ’s birth.

“The Pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christians, heavily influenced by the Pagan festival. The traditional riots and merry-making were so popular that “Christians” were glad of an excuse to continue the celebrations with little change in spirit and manner.” (*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*).

However, this date of December 25th was not accepted by some; therefore, they celebrated Christmas on January 6th, as the Eastern Orthodox Church does even today. It is also interesting to note that many of the festivities and symbols connected with Christmas, such as Christmas trees, Yule logs, Santa Claus or Father Christmas, etc. had their origin in Paganism.

On the other hand, if God desired that people celebrate His Son’s birthday, He would have

certainly revealed it to us in the Bible, just as He has revealed every other thing that we need to know, believe, and practice. He would have told us when and how we should observe the day, just as He has told us to commemorate Christ’s death on the first day of the week by partaking of the Lord’s Supper, as His faithful followers observe everywhere (Matthew 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). But there is neither a command nor example about observing and celebrating Christmas.

Why has God not even revealed the day or month in which Christ was born? God knows man’s idolizing tendency, and perhaps this may be the reason why He has not revealed the date of Christ’s birth. He doesn’t want us to glorify and give importance to a particular day, and to remember Him only once in a year, as many people do. Christmas is the only day of the year when almost all church buildings are full. That is the day when most people become more religious, loving, kind, forgiving, and giving. Christmas Day has become so important, influential and powerful for people that they sing, “*A man will live forever more because of Christmas day.*”

Christianity is not “once a year” religion. Christ said: “**If anyone desires to come after**