

WHY WE DO NOT CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Lk.2:1-20; 1Cor.11:23-29

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Lk.2:1-20 is often erroneously cited as the “Christmas story” or as Divine authority for celebrating Christmas religiously as the birth of Jesus.
2. By the expression, “Why We Do Not Celebrate Christmas,” we mean why:
 - a. We, both as individual Christians and as local churches of Christ, do not do so.
 - b. We do not in any way observe or celebrate it religiously or any other way as the birth day of Jesus.
 - c. We do not observe or celebrate the day called Christmas, nor the season associated with it, as holy.
3. Even though we recognize the importance of the fact of his coming to this earth as “God in the flesh”, we celebrate his death, not his birth.
 - a. This we do each Lord’s day, each 1st day of the week, in eating the Lord’s supper; for in doing so we “proclaim the Lord’s death till he come”; that is, till his 2nd coming, Ac.20:7; 1Cor.11:26.
 - b. This we do by the authority of Jesus himself, who said, “this do in remembrance of me,” Lk.22:19; 1Cor.11:23-25. Cf. Col.3:17.
4. Though many religious people and many human religions do observe or religiously celebrate the day called Christmas as the birthday of Jesus, we as N.T. Christians and members of the N.T. church, the church belonging to Christ, and the church, the one religious body of which he is the head, do not do so!
5. Our present study is for the purpose of citing some of the scriptural reasons why we do not do so.

II. DISCUSSION

A. BECAUSE THERE IS NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE, EITHER BIBLICAL OR SECULAR, TO ESTABLISH THAT JESUS WAS BORN ON DEC.25TH.

1. In fact, most religious scholars and historians agree that Jesus was **NOT** born on Dec.25th. Examples:

- a. The World Book Encyclopedia, Vol.3, p.416, says: “Scholars do not know the exact date of Christ’s birth...In A.D. 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate December 25th.”
- b. Encyclopedia Americana, Vol.6, p.623, says: “In the 5th century the western church ordered it to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol (the sun god), as no certain knowledge of Christ’s birth existed.”
- c. The truth is, no one knows, nor can they know, the exact date of the birth of Jesus.
- d. Even if we could know, we have no Divine authority to celebrate it as the birth of Jesus.

B. BECAUSE WE CANNOT OBSERVE CHRISTMAS AS THE BIRTHDAY OF JESUS ON DEC. 25TH OR ON ANY OTHER DAY “IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS.”

- 1. According to Mt.28:18, all power or authority in heaven and in earth has been given to or delegated to Jesus Christ.
- 2. According to Col.3:17, whatever we do in “word or deed,” we must do “in the name (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus”; that is, we must have authority from him to do it since he has all authority.
- 3. Since he has not authorized any religious observance of Christmas, either by direct statement, or by command, or by apostolic approved example, or by necessary implication, we cannot observe it in his name or by his authority.
 - a. If we do it in spite of this, we do so by human authority alone.
 - b. Then it would be of man, not of God; of earth, not of heaven.
 - c. It’s a human religious tradition which makes one’s worship vain, Mt.15:9.

C. BECAUSE THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST WHO WERE GIVEN DIVINE AUTHORITY TO BIND AND TO LOOSE ON EARTH WHATSOEVER HAS BEEN BOUND AND LOOSED IN HEAVEN (Mt.16:19; 18:18) AND WHO, AS CHRIST’S AMBASSADORS (2Cor.5:20), TAUGHT THE SAME THING EVERYWHERE IN EVERY CHURCH (1Cor.4:17) DID NOT TEACH CHRISTIANS TO KEEP OR TO OBSERVE OR TO CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS.

- 1. Thus it can’t be done by apostolic authority!

D. BECAUSE WE CANNOT CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS AND DO IT BY FAITH.

1. That is, by Bible faith!
2. Though people who do it believe in it, or have faith in their practice, it is not biblical faith.
3. This is because according to Rom.10:17, "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
4. Since the word of God contains no reference to Christmas and gives no authority for the practice of celebrating it, then it can't be done as a result of "hearing by the word of God"; therefore, it can't be by faith – that is, by faith that "cometh by hearing , and hearing by the word of God."
5. Therefore, it is a practice that is without faith! Cf. Gen.4; Heb.11 and the case of Cain and Able.

E. BECAUSE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS DOES NOT "PERTAIN TO LIFE AND GODLINESS."

1. If it did, then authority for it could be found in what the Lord, according to "his divine power hath given unto us" in the "all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue," 2Pet.1:2,3,4.
2. But celebrating Christmas is not found in the "all things that pertain to life and godliness" which the Lord hath given us!
3. Therefore, it does not "pertain to life and godliness."

F. BECAUSE WE CANNOT CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WHILE ABIDNG IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST.

1. According to 2Jno.9-11:
 - a. If we abide not in the doctrine (the teaching) of Christ we transgress the law of God, which according to 1Jno.3:4 is sin.
 - b. If we transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ, we have not God. (We have no fellowship with God. Cf. 1Jno.1:5,6).
 - c. If we abide in the doctrine of Christ, we are not to bid God speed to him who does not abide therein.
 - d. If we bid God speed to him who does not abide in the doctrine of Christ, we are partakers of his evil deeds.
2. Since celebrating Christmas is not found taught in the doctrine of Christ, we can't do it and abide in the doctrine of Christ at the same time!

G. BECAUSE CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS IS NOT A “GOOD WORK” IN THE BIBLICAL OR SCRIPTURAL SENSE.

1. According to 2Tim.3:16,17, the Scriptures “thoroughly furnish (“the man of God”) unto all good works.”
2. That is, if it is a “good work” in God’s sight, a work God has authorized us to practice in our worship and service to him, then it can be found taught in the Scriptures, either by direct statement, or command, or apostolic approved example, or necessary implication.
3. Where is the practice of celebrating Christmas taught in the Scriptures? Bk, Ch, Verse?
4. Therefore, it cannot be celebrated as a “good work” in God’s sight!

H. ACCORDING TO GAL.4:10,11, IN THIS THE N.T. AGE, THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF UNAUTHORIZED DAYS, MONTHS, TIMES, AND YEARS IS CONDEMNED.

1. Since the observance of Christmas is obviously unauthorized, it is therefore condemned!
2. For emphasis, we ask this question: Can you give even **ONE** Scriptural reason for religiously observing Christmas as the birth of Jesus, or for any other purpose?

I. NOW TO ANOTHER SIDE OF THE ISSUE GROWING OUT OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON SURROUNDING CHRISTMAS, IN VIEW OF WHICH WE MUST GUARD AGAINST GOING TO THE EXTREME OF BINDING AS SINFUL ANY AND ALL NON-RELIGIOUS, NON-HOLY OBSERVANCE OF CUSTOMS INVOLVING LIBERTIES RELATING TO THE HOLIDAY SEASON, OR TO OTHER THINGS THAT ORIGINATED IN AND FROM RELIGION.

1. Though we do not disagree about or over Scriptural authority for celebrating Christmas, we may disagree over some customs we have the liberty to practice during this holiday season.
2. “Holiday” and “holy day” are not one and the same thing.
 - a. “Holiday” has reference to that which is civil in nature, to that which has been set aside by civil government.
 - b. But a true “holy day” refers to that which is religious or sacred in nature, to that which God has set aside as a “holy day.”

- c. In this the N.T. age we have no designated “holy days.”
- 3. But there are customs that are practiced by many during this holiday season, including Christians, that involve liberties that have nothing to do with celebrating Christmas or with even believing in him.
 - a. Paul serves as an example in such things for us in observing customs and exercising certain liberties, Gal.1:6-10; Gal.4:10,11; Cf. 1Cor.9:19-23; Ac.16:1-3; Gal.2:1-5; Ac.21:22-26.
 - b. Though I grew up in a Baptist family who gave gifts to the children during this holiday season, it had nothing to do with celebrating Christmas or Jesus Christ.
 - c. All who have known me and my family intimately for years and our customs and liberties we have exercised in our practice during this holiday season have never had any trouble knowing we opposed celebrating Christmas.
 - (1) I never let my children participate in:
 - (a) Christmas programs at school.
 - (b) Singing songs teaching Christmas as the birthday of Jesus.
 - d. Through the years I have consistently taught and preached against its observance.
 - (1) In fact, this is the only church with which I have labored where I haven’t publicly preached a sermon against it.
 - (2) The reason I haven’t done so here is that others have so often publicly said so many things about it that I didn’t see the need.
 - e. Just because a family gathers on the day called Christmas to enjoy a family meal, or even to exchange gifts out of love for one another, does not necessarily mean they are celebrating Christmas and thus sinning any more than believers eating the meat that had been offered to idols referred to in Rom.14 and 1Cor.8 were eating it as a thing offered unto an idol and therefore sinning as some thought.
 - f. Just because a believer accepts:
 - (1) Christmas day as a holiday offered by the company for which he works doesn’t mean he is celebrating Christmas.
 - (2) A bonus his company offers employees at Christmas time doesn’t mean he is celebrating Christmas.
 - (3) A ham or turkey his company offers at that time of the year doesn’t mean he is celebrating Christmas.

3. Also there are other holidays that have religious origins and significance, and even the names of the days of our week, we must consider in light of guarding against going to the extreme in our personal scruples.
 - a. Halloween is the holy evening before saints day that stems from early pagan religious festivals to placate the Lord of death.
 - (1) Bonfires were built then to honor the sun god and to drive away evil spirits.
 - (2) Does that mean it is wrong for us to build a bonfire at or around Oct.31st?
 - (3) Is it wrong for children to dress up or not to dress up at that time and go door knocking, and to give them candy when they come to our door?
 - (4) Is simply to do those things as present-day customs, as we do them today, religiously observing Halloween as was originally initiated, or have such customs lost their original meaning?
 - b. The same kinds of things could be said of Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and certain present-day customs on Easter.
4. Is it wrong to circumcise male children? Remember: The practice originated religiously?
5. We must be careful in condemning all use of a word or a name or names just because they had their origins in religion and or originated for religious purposes, or to honor something considered sacred, or some religious person considered sacred.
 - a. The origins of the name of many cities is religious.
 - (1) San Francisco was named for St. Francis of Assisi.
 - (2) San Antonio, for St. Anthony.
 - (3) Corpus Christi means "the body of Christ."
 - (4) When we speak or use those names in ordinary every-day conversation, are we honoring these men religiously?
 - (5) Just because we may use the term Christmas in every-day conversation, does that mean we are using it in honor of and for the purpose of celebrating in some way the birthday of Jesus and thus sinning?
 - b. Even the days of the week on our calendar derived their names from heathen religious sources and gods of mythology. Some of the months are name for Roman gods. Yet we use these names all the time and think nothing about it, because we are not using them to honor the gods they represent. And some use such name being unaware of their origin!

- (1) "Sunday" is derived from the sacred day of the sun;
 - (2) "Monday," from the sacred day of the moon;
 - (3) "Tuesday," from Tiw the Gmc god identified with Roman mars;
 - (4) "Wednesday" is from "Wodens Day" – day of (the god) Odin. Woden was one of the chief idols of mythology;
 - (5) "Thursday" is the day of the war god, Thor;
 - (6) "Friday" is from "Frigg's day; named after Frigg, the wife of Odin;
 - (7) "Saturday" is from Saturn, and ancient god of agriculture.
 - (8) Though the names of these days originated in the context of religion and from pagan gods, etc., and were given as names to honor such gods, must they always have a religious significance in our use of them?
- c. Do you not see, then, that the name Christmas can also be used at times and in certain situations with no religious significance and even by one who does not even believe in Jesus?

III. CONCLUSION

1. In the area of non-religious customs practiced and liberties exercised pertaining to the holiday season often called the Christmas season, if you believe the practice of all such are wrong for you, that is your privilege. But to bind your conscience in such matters on others is not your privilege! But lets us ever be brethren even though we may differ in such matters!
2. Let us always bind and loose only where God has bound and loosed.
3. But let us be careful never to bind and loose where God has not bound nor loosed!