



Christmas: What Are We Going To Do With It? by Wayne Burger

*All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.*

Christmas: What are we going to do with it?

Some say, "We need to put Christ back into Christmas." Others say, "Christ was never meant to be in Christmas." Some celebrate it as a religious holiday. Other celebrate it as a secular holiday. Other do not celebrate it at all. What does God say about it? God has not authorized the church to celebrate Christmas as an official religious holiday. In fact, Paul condemned those who were binding religious holidays. He said,

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (**Galatians 4:9-11**)

Those were religious holidays they had to keep under the Law of Moses, but are no longer bound on Christians today.

How Christmas Came to Be a Religious Holiday

For the first 300 years the church did not celebrate Christmas and did not put any theological significance on the birth of Christ. The Roman Catholic Church, a departure from the New Testament church, began to come into existence about that time. It began to celebrate December 25th as the birthday of Christ about 325-350 A.D. They came to believe that the "birth of the world" was on March 25th, the vernal equinox. Therefore, they believed that the conception of the bright Son (Sun of Righteousness, **Malachi 4:2**), the Savior of the world occurred on that day. Therefore, they believe Christ was born on December 25th nine months later. The date of December 25th was also influenced by the sun cult, who honored that date with the feast called Sol Invictus, which celebrated the victory of light over darkness and the lengthening of the sun's rays at the winter solstice. Because the Roman Catholic Church wanted to incorporate the pagans into Christianity, they went along with the December 25th date.

What About Individuals Honoring Christmas?

Speaking of liberties we have in Christ, Paul said,

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord. (**Romans 14:5-6**)

Paul is not speaking about honoring the Lord on Sunday, because God has already set aside that day for us to honor Him (**I Corinthians 16:1- 2**; **Acts 20:7**; **Hebrews 10:25**). This passage teaches that if someone wants to honor God in some way on a day other than Sunday he or she may do so. He has the liberty to do so, but he cannot bind that day on anyone else. Parallel to that special day, if one wants to honor God by remembering Christ's birth or some other aspect of God on December 25th, he has that liberty, but he cannot bind that on anyone else.

Application

So, what is the application from all of this? ***If you want to honor Christmas as a way to honor God, you have that right, but you can't bind that on anyone else (Romans 12:5-6)***. The church cannot publicly, have Christmas as a special religious holiday because God has not authorized it to be done.

But, there is a practical side of Christmas. Let's promote the spirit that comes from Christmas. It is a time of families getting together. It is a time of giving gifts. It is a time of joy. All of those benefits are needed year- round. Let's also take the opportunity to correct some false teaching that is done about Christ and Christmas. ***People are more open to learning about Jesus now than probably any other time of the year. Let's correct the error in a spirit of love (Ephesians 4:15)***, not in a spirit of condemnation with a "holier than thou" attitude.

I hope that you and your family will have a wonderful Christmas time, however you decide to use it!

*(NOTE: Historical information in this article comes from **Church History Vol. I Christ to Pre-Reformation** by Everett Ferguson, pp. 252-253 and **A History of the Christian Church** revised edition, by Williston Walker, pp. 154- 155).*

—-- by Wayne Burger, 12/13/2020, Conifer Christian Connection