

CHRISTMAS
“THE POPISH-PAGAN HOLIDAY”
Why Christians Should Not Celebrate Christmas

WHAT IS IT???

Christmas is supposedly the time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. In our day this is very popular and it is associated with beautiful music, beautiful decorations, and religious zeal and of course, last but not least, with commercial zest. A prominent figure in the Christmas celebrations, sometimes even more prominent than the babe in a manger, is Santa Claus who almost assumes a divine character, and a jolly old man, who mysteriously brings gifts to all the children. This is also a time when families can share closeness together—which they may not have for the rest of the year.

No one can really deny that all of these characteristics seem beneficial and wholesome. The ornamentalism is really beautiful, often spectacular and breathtaking. Some of the music is actually very beautiful, sober and even spiritually minded. And who would deny that families need such an invigorating association as this day seemingly provides? And who would deny that we should honor the birth of Jesus Christ the Savior of the world? Certainly this is one time in the year when the world must recognize the supremacy of the person of the Christ of the Bible.

Anyone who would oppose this celebration is categorized as an old Scrooge who, as the story goes, had no family and was only a self-centered, unloving miser. However, there are obvious incongruities in this celebration. Most every one realizes and even openly admits that commercialism has stripped away a lot of the soberness of any spiritual benefit. In reality the sound of the cash registers seems more pronounced in stressing selfish values than real lasting family values. Therefore, we would ask, what are the real facts about this celebration? Does it really glorify Jesus Christ? And was it really ordered and designed by God? Are there hidden dangers in it?

WHO OPPOSED IT???

Many people are surprised to find out that early colonial America forbade the celebration of Christmas. Yes, the Pilgrims who first settled in America understood the Bible very literally, and since there was nothing in the Scriptures about this celebration they believed it was of the devil. In fact the Pilgrims and the Puritans effected laws to be established that prohibited the celebration of Christmas in the early colonies and some of those laws remained on the books for well over a hundred years and even longer. They considered the celebration a “Popish-Pagan fraud,” and a “dreadful work of Satan.” The Massachusetts Bay Colony legislature made Christmas illegal: “Whosoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas...shall pay for every offense five shillings.” One stern judge loudly proclaimed that “persons who even made mince pie or plum pudding over the holiday period would surely be cursed by God for all eternity.”

Probably the most serious charge against Christmas was that it “smacked of Roman Catholicism.” Though many of the harsh laws were dropped from books within the first sixty years, yet the unwritten prohibitions against it remained in Protestant

American society for another hundred and seventy-five years. Even school children in New England were made to attend school on Christmas day. This continued in Massachusetts up until 1856. In addition, the New York Daily Times for Dec. 26th, 1855 read, “The churches of the Presbyterian, Baptists, and Methodists were not open on Dec. 25.” The only churches open were the Catholic, Episcopal and Germanic, and they were decorated accordingly.

Actually, when the Protestant Reformation was taking place, the churches that were separating from under the domination of Rome were called “Protestants” because they were protesting the apostasy of Roman Catholicism and they wanted to return to Biblical Christianity. Most all these churches, with the exception of the Lutheran, rejected the religious holy days celebrated under Catholicism, including the celebration of Christmas. This carried over into the new world as America came to be populated primarily by Protestants, beginning with the Pilgrims and Puritans.

SO WHY DID THE PROTESTANTS, AND WE AS WELL, REJECT CHRISTMAS ??

1.) *Christmas celebrations are nowhere found in the Bible.* The early Christians did not celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ. They honored Christ to be sure, but not by celebrating His birthday. In fact, the Scriptures are not even specific as to the date of His birth. In other words, *the Scriptures are silent as to any such celebration as Christmas.* (Actually we shall see that the Scriptures forbid its celebration.)

2.) *Christmas was born out of Paganism.* Long before Christ was even born, the Pagans celebrated the “Birth Day of the Sun.” This was called “Natalis Invicti Solis”—“The birthday of the unconquered Sun.” For most of the pagan world this took place at the winter “Solstice”—the time of the year when the sun was lowest in the heavens. This was on approximately December 25th. The Roman celebrations were called “Saturnalia.” This was after the god Saturn and it consisted of great revelry at this time of the year.

3.) *Christmas is of Popish tradition.* About 350 A.D. the Imperial Church (The form of Christianity authorized by the Roman government), in order to win more of the pagans to Christianity, kept the pagan feast day celebration but changed its object of worship from the sun to the Son of God. They reasoned, what easier way could they win the pagans than by adopting their own festivities and convert them into the celebration of the birthday of Jesus Christ. At that time “the Church” called it “The Feast of The Nativity.” It was not until about 450 A.D. that it came to be called “Christi-Masse” (the Mass of Christ), hence “Christmas.” Thus, Christmas came to be called a “Popish” tradition by the Protestants who were endeavoring to return to Biblical Christianity.

As to Number 1-3 all historical authorities, secular, Roman Catholic or Protestant are in perfect agreement. See any Encyclopedia or historical reference work.

4.) *The Scriptures do not authorize the celebration of Christmas.* II Timothy 3:16,17, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” Romans 10:17 & 14:23, “faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God...whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” In fact the Scriptures warn against the celebration of holy days—

Gal. 4:10,11 & Col. 2:16 “You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you, lest I labored for you in vain...So let no one judge you (wrongfully) in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths.”

5.) “Christ-mas” is blasphemous. When one realizes what they are saying when they wish a person “merry Christmas,” they would never say it again. The word Christmas means “the Mass of Christ.” The Roman Catholic dictionary says, “*The Mass is the same sacrifice of the cross, because Jesus is the innocent victim. The difference between the sacrifice of the Cross is that the sacrifice of the Mass is not a bloody Sacrifice. It is under the appearance of bread and wine.*” (A Practical Catholic Dictionary, All Saints Press). In other words, when a person says “Merry Christmas” he is literally saying “merry sacrifice of Christ.” Therefore the very first Christ-Mass was not at the little town of Bethlehem, but rather at Pilate’s judgment hall and Golgotha where the world was having merriment at Christ’s expense.

6.) The world does not honor Jesus Christ! In John 5:40 & 41, Christ said “But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men.” Again Christ said, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil” (Jn. 7:7). “And this is the condemnation, that The Light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than Light, because their deeds were evil” (Jn. 3:19). “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world knew Him not” (Jn. 1:10). And in finality Christ said, “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 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 for doctrines the commandments of men’ (Matt. 15:7-9).

7.) Christians are not to follow the world’s religious traditions. Christ said, “That which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God” (Luke 16:15). “You shall not follow a multitude to do evil” (Exo. 23:2). “Beware lest anyone spoil you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Col. 2:8). “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:1,2). And Christ said, “They transgress the commandment of God by their traditions” (Matt. 15:2).