

December 25 Is Not a Holy Day, It Is a Holiday

Recently, we received a bulletin containing an article which pointed out that although many people are advocating putting Christ back into Christmas; Christ has never been in Christmas. There are many things we do not know, because God has not revealed them to us. One of those is the birthday of the Lord. However, God does give us enough information to know when the birthday of Christ is not — December 25th!

In the book of Chronicles, we learn that David divided the service of the priests into twenty-four courses. The eighth of these courses was the course of Abijah (1 Chron. 24:10). Twice in the year, each of these courses served a one week period (1 Chron. 9:25). Zachariah, the father of John was of the course of Abijah (Lk. 1:5), which means he served the eighth week of the year, which coincides with our late May or early June, and then again on the twenty-fourth week, which coincides with late August or early September. Luke's account clearly implies that Elizabeth conceived very shortly after Zachariah had finished his service (Lk. 1:23, 24). Since John was six months older than Jesus (Lk. 1:26), Jesus was born almost exactly a year after the angel appeared to Zachariah. Jesus, then, was likely born in early spring or late fall, but definitely not on December 25th.

The above is interesting, but is not the primary point. The main thing is that Christians are to worship the Christ on the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection, not the day of his birth. Many Bible artifacts and details of Bible events have been lost, and that, no doubt, by the providence of God, lest His people worship them. The day of the Lord's birth may well fall into that category. It is obvious that some have indeed worshiped the "birthday" of Jesus instead of the commanded first day of the week. That is evidenced by the fact that on the closest Sunday to December 25th far more people throughout the world attend some type of worship service than on any other Sunday of the entire year.

Some attempt to justify personally celebrating Christmas as a religious holy day by appealing to Romans 14:5, which reads: "*One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" It is impossible for the birthday of Christ to be included in the teaching of this verse, because no man knows when it is! Additionally, Paul was not advocating the celebration of Jewish or Pagan holy days by Christians. If he were, he would have been contradicting what he wrote to the Galatians about the same subject (Gal. 4:10, 11). The obvious meaning is that if an individual chooses to set aside a day for personal devotion and study to God, that is fine, but it has nothing to do with a so called holy day! To claim that it does is the same careless exegesis of scripture that has recently caused some to claim Jesus was not condemning the wearing of religious titles in Matt. 23:6-10.

With the above having been pointed out, remember that Christmas is a declared national holiday, and there is nothing wrong with observing it as such. This is a traditional holiday season when families and friends gather to enjoy one another's company. That is fine. Neither is there anything wrong with the Christmas tree, decorations, and exchanging of gifts, so long as folks understand that the holiday is not a religious or holy day. Lest one violate a personal scruple or be concerned with leaving the false impression with others that they do esteem it as a religious holiday, some choose not to participate in some activities associated with the season. For instance, there is nothing wrong with going from house to house singing some of the Christmas songs, but some, afraid of leaving the wrong impression with people, choose not to do it. There is no justification for criticizing that personal decision, or even the decision not to participate in the holiday at all, because one could be tempted to do something against his conscience, in

which case it would be sin. On the other hand, one must not make laws for others on matters in which God has not ruled. As in all things, common sense, good judgment, concern for feelings and, above all, respect for God's Word must guide us in all that we do.

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