

San Juan church of Christ

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What Does God's Word Say About...

Christmas and the Birth of Jesus

Millions of believers in Christ celebrate December 25th as a special religious holiday because they believe it is the date of Christ's birth. Few people, including many believers in Christ, are aware of the fact that the Bible is completely silent concerning any special festivities commemorating the date of Christ's birth. The history of the celebration of Christmas began when Constantine, the emperor of Rome, who considered himself to be a Christian, brought bishops [elders] together from every church to the Council of Nicene in 325 A.D. From this Council the bishop of Rome decreed, in 354 A.D. that December 25th, a pagan feast day in honor of the god, Saturn, should also be observed in honor of Christ's birth.

It is interesting to note that many of the festivities connected with Christmas had their origin in paganism, not in the Bible. The name "Christmas", itself, comes from "Christ" and "Mass," referring to the worship of the Roman Catholic Church. The Christmas tree originated in Scandinavia. The pagans of that part of the world worshipped trees before they became believers in Christ. Decorating with mistletoe originated with the ancient Celtic priests, called Druids, who used mistletoe as charms to ward off evil spirits. The burning of yule logs, which is customary in many countries, came from the ancient Norsemen who burned a log once a year in honor of Thor, god of Thunder. These are a few examples of the pagan worship that were brought into the celebration of Christmas.

The Bible gives two accounts of the birth of Jesus. They are found in Matthew, chapters 1 and 2, and in Luke, chapter 2. There is no mention of the date of Jesus' birth and there is no command for our Lord's birth date to be observed in any way. Rather, the New Testament emphasis is on the death and resurrection of Christ. His death made possible the forgiveness of our sins, and His resurrection makes possible our victory over death. The only day set aside for special religious observance in the New Testament is the Lord's Day, Sunday, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10). The Lord's Supper, observed on the first day of the week, is to "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes," (1 Cor. 11:26).

The founding of Christmas owes its origin to man and not God. God never authorized a religious observance called "Christmas" in the scriptures. Paul wrote, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father," (Col. 3:17). The expression "in the name of the Lord Jesus", means "by the authority of". There is no Biblical authority for the religious observance of Christmas.

Please send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:

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