
Is It OK for a Christian to Observe Christmas?

Rom 14:1-6

Introduction:

1. I love the Christmas season
 - a. I enjoy the family gatherings and the Christmas meals
 - b. I enjoy the snow and all the decorations
 - c. I find great joy in preaching on the great Christmas themes
2. But I did not always feel that way about Christmas
 - a. For a couple of years, Vicky and I did not celebrate Christmas
 - b. We did not have a tree and we did not decorate
 - c. We believed that Christians should not observe this pagan holiday
 - d. We believed that Christmas was an unholy mixture of paganism and Roman Catholicism
3. Should a Christian observe Christmas?
 - a. It seems like a silly question
 - b. But there are many Baptists who do not observe Christmas
 - c. They are good people and they are sincere
 - d. They are our friends and they have preached for me
 - e. Candidated at churches where the 1st question was about Christmas
4. I would not criticize anyone for an honest, worshipful, spiritual and loving attitude about Christmas
5. Why would some Baptists not celebrate Christmas?
6. This morning I don't want to preach to you, but I want to talk to you – I want to give you my feelings on Christians observing Christmas.
 - a. If you disagree, that is fine – we all have our own convictions
 - b. I'm just telling you what I think.

Let's read our opening scripture

Ro 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

I. Dec 25th is Not Really Christ's Birthday

A. The Objection

1. I agree wholeheartedly that Jesus was not born on Dec 25th
2. Our Savior probably was not born on Dec. 25th
3. There are no reliable records that tell the exact day of Christ's birth
4. The shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks by night and this could not possibly be Dec 25th
5. No emperor would order a census for the middle of winter and make people travel long distances in winter weather.

B. My Answer

1. Suppose that someone was born on Feb 29th – leap day
 - a) *Would it be wrong to celebrate his birthday during those years with no Feb 29th?*
 - b) *No, the exact date is not that important, the fact that another year has gone by and the person is another year older needs to be recognized*
2. We celebrate Thanksgiving every year and the date doesn't seem to make that much difference.
 - a) *Thanksgiving is the last Thursday of November*
 - b) *The date is not that important – it is a day to give thanks*
3. We want to remember the birth of the Lord
 - a) *We want our kids to know about the wise men and the babe in the manger*
 - b) *We want our kids to know how the angels announced his birth to the shepherds*
 - c) *Dec 25th is as good a day as any on which to do this*
4. I do not think that it is wrong to celebrate Jesus' birth on Dec 25th

II. Christmas = Christ's Mass – A Catholic Holiday

A. The Objection

1. Take the word apart and see that Christmas = Christ's mass
2. Since it is a Catholic creation Baptists should not observe Christmas
3. Recognizing Christmas is recognizing a Catholic holiday

B. The Answer

1. I contend that the way a thing starts does not mean that is the way it is today
2. This objection seems foolish if one remembers that most of the names we have come from heathen sources
3. The days of the week come from heathen sources
 - a) *Monday is named in honor of the moon god*
 - b) *Saturday is named in honor of Saturn*
 - c) *Sunday is named in honor of the Sun*
 - d) *Do we strike these days from our calendar since they are pagan?*
4. Many cities, counties, rivers have Indian names
 - a) *Sesquehanna and Monongohila Rivers*
 - b) *Monongalia County etc*
 - c) *When we say these names we are not thinking about the Indians*
5. There used to be ten months
 - a) *It makes sense when you remember that sept = 7 and oct = eight and dec = ten*
 - b) *Julius Caesar thought that he was so special that he added his own month to the calendar – July – he was worshipped as a god*
 - c) *Later Caesar Augustus figured that if Julius Caesar could add a month, he could add one – August*
6. People live in Saint Albans, St. Petersburg, St. Augustine, San Francisco, San Antonio – does that mean that they are honoring those saints?
7. People live in Eleanor, WV – does that mean that they are followers of Eleanor Roosevelt

III. Christmas Was Formerly a Heathen Holiday

A. The Objection

1. There was a pagan feast on Dec 25th called Saturnalia
2. As these pagans converted to Catholicism they wanted to celebrate on this day since they were used to doing this.
3. Instead of forbidding the celebration the Catholics incorporated it into their church year and said that it was the birth of Christ

B. The Answer

1. Celebrating Christmas today is not continuing a pagan holiday
2. If we ruled out every day when the pagans did something or celebrated something then there would be no days left for Christians to celebrate anything
 - a) *Suppose the Mayans observed April 15th*
 - b) *Suppose the Incas had a feast on Oct 8th*
 - c) *Suppose the Buddhists have on March 5th*
 - d) *An on and on – there would be no days left for us*
3. Some people bought an old movie theater and converted it into a church building.
 - a) *Suppose movies were shown there every Friday and Saturday night for years*
 - b) *Does that mean that they could not hold revival meetings there on Friday and Saturday nights?*
4. If the devil used Dec 25th for a thousand yrs, then why can't we use Dec 25th for 2000 yrs?
5. All the days belong to the Lord and Dec 25th is one of those days

IV. Christmas Trees / Decorations are an Abomination

A. The Objection

Jer 10:1 Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel: 2 Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. 3 For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. 4 They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not.

1. This is a description of an idol
2. God told the Jews not to be afraid of the idol for it could do no good or evil

B. The Answer

1. I don't know any Christian who is bowing down to his Christmas tree like an idol worshipper bows before his idol.
2. Vicky and I will have a Christmas tree – but we will worship Christ

V. There is Too Much Revelry During the Holidays

A. The Objection

1. Many people use the holidays as an excuse for partying
2. Many do not honor the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
3. Many storeowners think of Christmas as a time to make money to carry them through the year
4. Many dishonor Christ at Christmas time

B. The Answer

1. Just because some abuse and misuse the holidays, does that mean that we should give this time up to Satan and the lost and not celebrate it ourselves?
2. There are many parties on Sunday
 - a) *There are tailgate parties before NFL football games*
 - b) *People get drunk and party*
 - c) *In the summer, at the baseball stadium fans are drinking right in the stands*
3. Should we give up on Sunday worship since so many people get drunk on Sunday?
4. Many people pervert baptism
 - a) *They think that is saves an individual*
 - b) *They think that you can't get to heaven without it*
 - c) *They are wrong*
 - d) *Should we give up on baptism and stop baptizing since so many pervert it?*
5. The second coming of Christ is often misunderstood and perverted
 - a) *Many people set dates*
 - b) *Many have wrong beliefs about the 2nd coming*
 - c) *Should we just give up and quit preaching on the second coming?*
6. If the world has a day of partying and drinking, then let us have a day of honoring Christ and thinking about his birth

VI. It Is Improper to Give Gifts on Christ's Birthday

A. The Objection

1. Since it is Christ's birthday, we shouldn't give each other presents
2. Giving promotes greed and commercialism

B. The Answer

1. Christ should be first at Christmas and all the time
2. We should give ourselves and all we have to Him
3. Giving gifts to others is a proper way to honor God
 - a) *Ne 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*
 - b) *Esther 9:22 As the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor.*
4. When Zacchaeus was saved he decided to give half of his goods to the poor – Lu 19:8
5. The rich young ruler wanted to follow the Lord, He told him to give his property to the poor

Conclusion:

1. I am convinced that Christmas is what you make of it
 - a. One person makes it a drunken, dope-smoking party
 - b. Another person gets closer to God and remembers the birth of the Savior
 - c. He is thankful for his salvation – for without a birth, there could be no death of Christ for sinners.