

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“‘Tis The Season”

By Glendol McClure

On Thursday, November 28, 2024, many observed the national holiday, Thanksgiving Day! Many Americans take the day off from the normal work schedule and feast over a turkey dinner and all the trimmings, watch football games and visit with family and friends. I wonder how many daily offer thanks for the prosperity enjoyed by most of this nation. I believe it would be correct to conclude that most people in this nation offer thanks only on Thanksgiving Day, if then; practicing “seasonal thanksgiving.”

Likewise, as we approach the traditional “Christmas season,” many will get the “Christmas Spirit” and practice “seasonal religion” and some (even some of our brethren) will even proclaim that *“Jesus is the reason for the season.”* You will see various denominations and even some *liberal* “Churches of Christ” presenting their “special Christmas Programs” in celebration of the birth of Christ, which is vain worship according to Jesus Christ himself (Matt. 15:7-9).

Concerning the birth of Christ, there are several facts that many either ignore or do not know: (1) No man knows the birth date of Jesus because the Bible does not reveal it! (2) Observing December 25th as a religious holiday began as a pagan festival connected with the worship of the sun and other idolatrous practices. (3) This day was later transformed into a “Christian” holy day by the Catholic church when Bishop Liberius of Rome adopted this day as the birthday of Christ in 354 A.D., therefore, celebrating a “Christ-mass” for the occasion. (4) There is no New Testament command, apostolic example or necessary implication that sanctions celebrating the birth of Christ. The following information is from the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*, prepared by John McClintock and James Strong, pp. 276-277.

“The observation of Christmas is not of divine appointment nor is it of N.T. origin. The day of Christ’s birth cannot be ascertained for the N.T. or, indeed from any other source. The fathers of the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity. The baptism of Jesus was celebrated in the Eastern Church by A.D. 220, but not in the Western until the fourth century; and the Eastern Church finally adopted the Christmas festival from the Western (about A.D. 330)....But it is historically certain that the Christmas festival proper is comparatively of late institution....In the first place, no corresponding festival was presented by the Old Testament....In the second place, the day and the month of the birth of Christ is nowhere stated in the Gospel history, and cannot be certainly determined. Again, the church lingered at first about the death and resurrection of Christ, the completed fact of redemption, and made this the center of the weekly worship....The heathen winter holidays (Saturnalia, Juvenalia, Brumalia) were undoubtedly transformed, and, so to speak, sanctified by the establishment of the Christmas cycle of holidays; and the heathen customs, so far as they were harmless (e.g. the giving of presents, lighting tapers, etc.), were brought over into Christian usage.”

Aside from the fact that the observance of Christmas as a religious holiday is NOT divinely authorized, there are other concerns that must be mentioned. Many of the world, including some brethren, seem to get very “spiritual” during this time of the year. Of course, we are to be spiritually minded, but, our spirituality must not be “seasonal.” Paul commanded Timothy to **“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine”** (2 Tim. 4:2). It follows then, if the Word is to be always preached, then it should be always practiced, and not just seasonally!

It is also interesting to note that during this supposedly religious time of the year, the consumption of alcoholic beverages by some is at a peak! Greed, wasteful spending and gluttony will abound, and some people will trample other shoppers at stores in order to take advantage of special deals. Many “charitable organizations” or “armies” will have their coin pots strategically positioned at shopping malls and stores this time of the year, and some folks become very “benevolent” during this “season” by unloading their loose change. Worse yet, some brethren will even cut their contribution back (or out all together) because of overspending on Christmas gifts!

Obedient Christians though, pray and give thanks daily (Acts 12:5; Rom. 1:9; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2:13; 5:17; 2 Tim. 1:3)!

Likewise, on the **“first day of the week”** (that is, every week, since each week has a first day) faithful Christians will observe the **DEATH** of Christ (not His birth) and they will **“lay by...in store”** as they have been prospered without fail (Acts 20:7; Matt 26:26-30; 1 Cor: 16:1, 2).

Question, is your service to God daily or seasonal? So, who will you serve **“‘Tis the season”** – **“the god of this world”** (2 Cor. 4:4), or **“Christ Jesus the Lord”** (2 Cor. 4:5)? ■

Who Put Christ In Christmas?

By Larry Ray Hafley

During December we are reminded to, “Keep Christ In Christmas.” Who, though, put him there in the first place?

Did God? We know **“the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world”** (1 John 4:14). Jesus said that he neither acted or spoke of his own will, but that he said and did only those things authorized by his Father (John 6:38; 12:49). Is the celebration of Jesus’ birth a thing spoken by the Father to the Son?

We are not saying the birth of Jesus was not the Father’s will. It was. To God the Father, Jesus said, **“A body hast thou prepared me”** (Heb. 10:5). **“When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman”** (Gal. 4:4). About Jesus’ birth, as related by Matthew and Luke, there can be no dispute. However, we are asking a separate question; namely, did God put Christ in the tradition that we know as Christmas? What Scripture shows that God placed Christ in Christmas and put Christmas in the worship of the church? Does anyone know? If not, how can we say that God put Christ in Christmas?

Did Jesus? Jesus was given all authority (Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23). Did he place himself in Christmas? Since he is the founder and the foundation of our faith, if his Father did not put him in Christmas, perhaps, as head of the church, he did so himself (Eph. 5:23, 24). If he did, where might we find this information? Surely, in the New Testament, but do we find it there? Do we have a source which shows that Jesus taught his disciples to keep a tradition called Christmas, or an annual remembrance of his birth? If so, where is it? If it cannot be found, is it correct to say that Christ put himself in Christmas and that he set Christmas in the church?

Did The Holy Spirit? Jesus promised the apostles the Spirit would guide them **“into all truth,”** revealing to them things he had not spoken to them directly (Jn. 16:12-15). So, then, did the Spirit design the Christmas season as we know it, and did he put Christ in Christmas? If he did, we must accept his word and **“keep Christ in Christmas,”** for to reject the Spirit is to reject God (1 Cor. 2:10-13; 1 Thess. 1:5; 2:13; 5:19; Cf. Acts 5:3, 4, 9). Where has the Spirit revealed that he is the one who put Christ in Christmas and Christmas in the church?

Did The Apostles? To reject the word of the apostles is to reject the word of Christ and God (Lk. 10:16; 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 4:1, 2, 8). The **“apostles’ doctrine”** is **“the doctrine of the Lord”** (Acts 2:42; 13:12). Thus, if we can find the apostles putting and keeping Christ in Christmas, we may do likewise with the approval of heaven. Do we read of disciples who, at the behest of the apostles, observed the Christmas tradition, or who noted the birth of Jesus in any manner? Since keeping Christ in Christmas allegedly is an important duty, we should expect to find the first fervent and devout disciples of the Lord doing so. But, is that what we find?

“December 25 is...observed as the...birth of Christ. In early times this day was not one of the feasts of the Christian Church. In fact, the church fathers frowned upon the celebration of birthdays and thought them a heathen custom. It is thought that Christmas was not celebrated until some 300 years after the birth of Christ.

“No one is certain why December 25 was chosen. There is nothing in the New Testament to indicate that this is the date of the Nativity” (**The New Book Of Knowledge**, Vol. 3, p. 289).

Since neither God, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, nor the apostles put Christ in Christmas, why should we? If your preacher encourages you to “keep Christ in Christmas,” show him this article and ask him to answer it. ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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