

Christmas — From Heaven or of Men?

- God Has Clearly Revealed What He Wants Remembered
- The Bible Does Not Reveal the Date of Jesus' Birth
- Christmas as Worship Is of Human Origin
- Distinguishing Civil Customs from Religious Worship

Every generation of God's people, has faced the challenge of, distinguishing what God has commanded, from what man has added.

Religious practices often become accepted, simply because they are familiar, emotional, or widely practiced — yet familiarity does not equal authority.

Jesus taught that religious actions, must be tested by their origin — God or man.

- He asked, “**The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?...**” ([Matt.21:25](#))

Explanation:

- “**Whence**” means — from where; or source.
- What is “**from heaven**” carries God's approval; what is “**of men**” does not.

Paul sets the boundary for everything we practice as Christians.

- He said, “**And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...**” ([Col.3:17](#))

Explanation:

- “**Whatsoever**” means — anything at all.
- “**In the name of**” means — by the authority of.
- “**Word or deed**” means — what we teach and what we practice.

God willing, this morning, we will test the subject of “Christmas”, by Scripture alone in four steps:

- What God authorized us to remember
- What God did not reveal about Christ's birth date
- Why Christmas worship is from men, not God
- How to keep civil customs separate from worship

Since God commands worship, our first question must be:
What has God actually told us, to remember and observe?

I. God Has Clearly Revealed, What He Wants Remembered

From [Acts 20:7](#), we learn what the church did, when it assembled in the apostolic age of the first century.

- “**upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached...**”

Explanation:

- “**First day of the week**” means — the day christians assembled (which is Sunday in our calendar).
- “**Break bread**” means — partaking of the Lord's Supper.

From [1Cor.11:26](#), Paul explains what the Lord's Supper is proclaiming.

- He said, “**For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.**”

Explanation:

- “**Shew**” means — proclaim, declare openly.
- “**Till He come**” means — this memorial continues until the return of Christ.
- God chose a memorial — not of Christ's birth — but of His death.

[Heb.10:10](#), points to the saving act, God emphasizes.

- “**By the which will, we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.**”

Explanation:

- “**Sanctified**” means — set apart as holy.
- “**Offering**” means — sacrifice.
- “**Once for all**” means — one complete sacrifice, not repeated.
- Our salvation is tied to the offering of Christ (or His sacrifice), which explains why Scripture centers remembrance, on the cross.

If remembering Christ's birth were required, we should expect a clear command.

A. Jesus Never Commanded a Celebration of His Birth

Jesus limits discipleship, to what He commanded.

- He said, "Teaching them to **observe** all things **whatsoever I have commanded** you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." ([Matt.28:20](#))

Explanation:

- "Observe" means — keep, practice.
- "Whatsoever I have commanded" means — only what Christ authorized.
- We must observe what Christ commanded — not what tradition later invented.

Jesus connects love to obedience, not innovation.

- He said, "If ye love Me, **keep My commandments**." ([Jn.14:15](#))

Explanation:

- "Keep" means — guard, obey, practice faithfully.
- "Commandments" means — authorized instructions.
- Love does not add religious practices; love keeps what Christ said.

Paul warns against stepping outside of Scripture.

- He said, "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure, transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us, not to think of men, above **that which is written**, that no one of you, be **puffed up**, for one against another." ([1Cor.4:6](#))

Explanation:

- "That which is written" means — Scripture.
- "Puffed up" means — proud, inflated in self-will.
- God's people must not elevate human ideas, above written revelation.

Jesus never commanded an annual religious celebration of His birth. **Silence never equals permission.**

Before we go further, we must remove a common misunderstanding:

Refusing Christmas as worship, is not refusing Christ.

B. Belief in the Birth of Christ, Is Not the Same as Celebrating It Religiously

Matthew plainly records, the virgin birth.

- "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When, as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child **of the Holy Spirit**." ([Matt.1:18](#))

Explanation:

- "Before they came together" means — before marital relations.
- "Of the Holy Spirit" means — divine origin of conception.
- The birth is true and miraculous — but the Bible does not command a religious festival for it.

The angel explains to Mary why Jesus' birth is unique.

- "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest, shall **overshadow** thee: therefore also that **holy thing** which shall be born of thee, shall be called the **Son of God**." ([Lk.1:35](#))

Explanation:

- "Overshadow" means — God's holy power enveloped Mary by the Holy Spirit—without human involvement—bringing about a miraculous and pure conception.
- "Holy thing" means — set apart, unique.
- "Son of God" means — divine identity.
- Jesus is both truly born in the flesh and truly the Son of God in spirit.

We believe in the birth of Christ ([Gal.4:4](#)). But belief does not authorize an annual holy day.

If Christmas were truly “from heaven,” we would expect the apostles—who were guided into all truth—to teach it, and the early church to practice it.

C. The Apostles Never Practiced or Taught Christmas

[Acts 2:42](#), describes what the early church continued in.

- “And they **continued stedfastly** in the **apostles’ doctrine** and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Explanation:

- “**Continued stedfastly**” means — devoted themselves persistently.
- “**Apostles’ doctrine**” means — authoritative teaching.
- The apostolic pattern included doctrine, prayer, fellowship, and the Lord’s Supper — not Christmas.

God expects Christians to follow approved apostolic examples.

- Paul said, “**Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.**” ([Phil.3:17](#))

Explanation:

- “**Mark**” means — take careful note **AND** “**Ensample**” means — example to imitate.
- We follow approved examples — and the apostles gave no example of Christmas observance.

God revealed the memorial He wanted: the Lord’s Supper proclaiming Christ’s death. Christmas is absent from apostolic doctrine and practice.

Now that we know God did not command a birthday memorial, we ask the next question: Did God even reveal the date?

II. The Bible Does Not Reveal, the Date of Jesus’ Birth

Since God revealed the memorial He wanted, His silence about a birth date is meaningful.

Matthew gives historical context, not a calendar date.

- The Bible says, “**Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,**” ([Matt.2:1](#))

Explanation:

- “**In the days of**” means — time period, not date.
- God tells us where and in whose days — not “December 25th.”

Luke describes the setting, at the time of birth.

- He wrote, “**And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.**” ([Lk.2:8](#))

Explanation:

- “**Abiding**” means — staying, living out.
- “**Keeping watch**” means — guarding attentively.
- The conditions described, do not fit a winter assumption, and God still provides no date.

God explains that some things, He chose not to reveal.

- “**The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever...**” ([Deut.29:29](#))

Explanation:

- “**Secret things**” means — unrevealed matters.
- “**Revealed**” means — made known by God for obedience.
- If God did not reveal the birth date, He did not require the observance.

A repeated religious observance, requires clear revelation — not assumption.

A. December 25th Is Never Mentioned in Scripture

God warns about adding to His word.

- “**Add** thou NOT unto His Words, lest He **reprove** thee, and thou be found a liar.” ([Prov.30:6](#))

Explanation:

- “**Add**” means — attach what God did not give.
- “**Reprove**” means — correct, expose.
- Adding a religious holy day, is adding to God’s words.

Paul condemns any teaching, that changes the revealed message.

- He said, “**But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.**” (read [Gal.1:8-9](#))

Explanation:

- “**Another gospel**” means — different message than revealed truth.
- “**Accursed**” means — under God’s condemnation.
- Religious additions, corrupt the gospel and bring condemnation.

God did not reveal a birth date and warns against adding religious practices.
Therefore December 25th, has no biblical authority.

If Christmas worship is not from Scripture, the next question is unavoidable:
Is it from heaven, or of men?

III. Christmas as Worship, Is of Human Origin

When God has not authorized something, we must not treat it as worship — even if it feels meaningful.

Jesus warns that worship, can be sincere and still be empty.

- “**But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**” ([Matt.15:9](#))

Paul warns believers about religious “day-keeping.”

- “**Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**
I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you, labour in vain.” ([Gal.4:10-11](#))

Explanation:

- “**Observe**” means — keep as religious duty.
- “**In vain**” means — wasted spiritually.
- Religious calendar observances, can pull hearts away, from the covenant of Christ.

Paul shows that religious days were shadows; Christ is the substance.

- “**Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.**” ([Col.2:16-17](#))

Explanation:

- “**Judge**” means — condemn, bind on conscience.
- “**Holyday**” means — religious festival day.
- “**Shadow**” means — temporary pointer.
- “**Body**” means — substance, reality.
- Christians are not to be bound to holy days.
Christ is the reality; shadows do not rule worship, the very image (Christ) does.

Feeling right, does not make something right.

A. Sincerity, Does Not Create Authority

Jesus describes people who were religious — but rejected.

- He said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **doeth the will** of my Father which is in heaven. ...depart from me, ye that work **iniquity**.” ([Matt.7:21-23](#))

Explanation:

- “**Doeth the will**” means — obeys God’s commands.
- “**Iniquity**” means — lawlessness (or doing without God’s law).
- Religious works, without obedience to God’s will, are rejected.

Jesus states, what God demands in worship.

- He said, “...**God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth.**” ([Jn.4:24](#))

Explanation:

- “**Must**” means — requirement, not suggestion.
- True worship must be offered with the right heart (“**spirit**”) and the right standard (“**truth**”).

Sincerity, does not authorize worship (see [Lev.10:1-2](#)). God requires truth ([Jn.4:23-24](#)).

Man-made observances, often overshadow God-given ones.

B. Christmas Worship, Distracts from God’s Appointed Memorial

The Lord Himself appointed a memorial, and it focuses on His death.

- “For I have **received** of the Lord, that which also I **delivered** unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in **remembrance** of Me.” ([1Cor.11:23-24](#))

Explanation:

- “**Received**” and “**delivered**” means — apostolic authority.
- “**Remembrance**” means — memorial commanded by the Lord.
- Jesus commanded remembrance — and specified what to remember.

God commands regular assembly and faithfulness — not seasonal religion.

- The Bible says, “**Not forsaking** the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but **exhorting** one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” ([Heb.10:25](#))

Explanation:

- “**Forsaking**” means — abandoning, neglecting.
- “**Exhorting**” means — encouraging strongly.
- Faithfulness is steady, not occasional.

Christmas, as worship is from men, not heaven; sincerity cannot authorize it; Scripture warns against turning truth, into unauthorized worship.

Now, an honest listener may ask: “Does that mean everything done on December 25th is sinful?” No — to my knowledge, dates are not sinful. What is sinful is treating a man-made day, as religious worship without God’s authority. Let’s answer carefully and biblically by...

IV. Distinguishing Civil Customs from Religious Worship

Rejecting Christmas as worship, does not automatically condemn every civil activity — but worship must remain pure, and one’s conscience, must not be bound.

Paul teaches liberty in matters of personal judgment — not liberty to invent worship.

- He said, “**One man esteemeth one day, above another: another esteemeth every day, alike. Let every man be fully persuaded, in his own mind.**” ([Rom.14:5](#))

Explanation:

- “**Esteemeth**” means — regards, considers.
- “**Fully persuaded**” means — settled by conviction.
- Personal choices, must not become binding religious law.

Some actions are plainly civil and moral.

A. Family Time, Kindness and Giving, Are Not Worship

So, Is it wrong to have a family gathering? Scripture commends joy in family life.

- “**Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity, which He hath given thee, under the sun...**” ([Ecc.9:9](#))

Explanation:

- “**Live joyfully**” means — enjoy life in wholesome righteousness.
- Family joy is a good gift from God — not a religious holy day.
- But be sure not to forsake the scriptural worship assembly, for family gatherings (read [Heb.10:24-31](#))

Is it wrong to give gifts? Jesus teaches the blessedness of giving.

- “**...He said, It is more blessed to give, than to receive.**” ([Acts 20:35b](#); [Lk.6:32-35](#))

Explanation:

- “**More blessed**” means — spiritually happier, favored.
- Kindness, generosity, and family care, are good every day of the year — but they are not acts of worship.

Civil kindness and generosity are good — but they must never be turned into worship without authority.

Even when adults understand liberty, children learn mainly, by what they see practiced.

B. What Are We Teaching Our Children?

Training, shapes future direction.

- “**Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.**” ([Prov.22:6](#))

Explanation:

- “**Train up**” means — dedicate, instruct, guide.
- Habits taught early, shape convictions later.

Parents must lead with truth and correction.

- The Bible says, “**And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.**” ([Eph.6:4](#))

Explanation:

- “**Nurture**” means — training, discipline **AND** “**Admonition**” means — warning instruction.
- Children must be raised in the Lord’s instruction, not human religion.

We must ensure our children learn that authority matters, and God’s word is the standard.

Because this subject is often misunderstood, we should be prepared to answer

C. Common Claims

Over the years, faithful Christians have faced unfair accusations regarding Christmas. Let's answer some plainly with Scripture.

Claim #1: "You don't believe in the birth of Jesus."

- The Bible teaches the virgin birth, and we believe it fully ([Matt.1:18-25](#); [Gal.4:4](#); [Lk.1:35](#)).

Claim #2: "You don't believe Jesus is Lord."

- Jesus is Lord because He has authority — and as Lord, He did not authorize Christmas ([Matt.28:18](#); [Col.3:1](#)).

Claim #3: "If it honors Jesus, it must be acceptable."

- Jesus said worship must be according to truth, not tradition ([Jn.4:23-24](#)).

The issue is not whether Jesus was born, but whether God authorized a religious observance of it.

Even where liberty exists, Christians must guard their influence, about what is worship.

D. Christians Must Avoid Religious Confusion

Paul warns about appearance and influence.

- He said, "**Abstain from all appearance of evil.**" ([1Thess.5:22](#))

Explanation:

- "**Abstain**" means — hold back, keep away.
- "**Appearance**" means — outward form that suggests wrongdoing.
- We must avoid actions, that reasonably suggest, we endorse false worship.

From [Matt.18:6](#), Jesus warns about causing others to stumble.

- "**But whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him, that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.**"

Explanation:

- "**Offend**" means — cause to stumble into sin.
- We must not lead others — especially children — into confusion or error.

Civil customs may be enjoyed wisely, but Christians must never attach religious significance — to what God has not authorized.

V. Closing Thoughts

Jesus was born — and we rejoice every day.

But God chose the cross, not the cradle, as the memorial of salvation.

- Jesus said, "**If ye love Me, keep My commandments.**" ([Jn.14:15](#))

Are we honoring Christ as He instructed, or as tradition suggests?

Source: Adapted from a sermon outline by Ron Halbrook
Other credits: Terry Wayne Benton, David Riggs, Larry Hafley, Joe R Price
Edited & formatted by Michael Wright