

What about Christmas?

It is not the giving of gifts that is challenged. It is not the happy associations we may have with our families and friends. Such things can be right at any time of the year. We are not questioning these things. Our point is simply this: The Bible does not inform us as to the birthday of Christ, nor does the Bible authorize us to make a religious observance of the birthday of Christ. Hence, to attempt such is to go beyond the limits of divine authority.

- by Paul C. Keller

Where Did Christmas Originate & Who Authorized It?

To answer these questions it is necessary to go outside the New Testament. The Encyclopedia Americana says, "The Christmas celebration was not observed in the first centuries of the church." The Catholic Encyclopedia says, "Christmas was not among the early festivals of the church."

Now notice this: If we cannot find the Christmas observance in the New Testament, and a secular encyclopedia says that it was not observed in the first centuries of the church, and a religious encyclopedia says that it was nonexistent in the early church, then we must conclude that it did not originate with the apostles.

By whose authority did this December observance originate? Colliers Encyclopedia tells us that Lyberius, the Bishop of Rome, whom the Catholics regard as one of the early Popes, ordered in 354 A.D. that "December 25th be observed as the birthday of Christ." December 25th had formerly been used by the Romans as a feast day for their Sun-God, Mithra. The Roman Saturnalia (riotous festival of Saturn) also came at this time. "The indications are that the church in this way grasped an opportunity to turn the people away from a purely pagan observance of the winter solstice to a day of adoration of Christ the Lord. Both Saint Cyprian and Saint John Chrysostom allude to this thought in their writings." (Colliers Encyclopedia) "December 25th was already a festive day for the sun god, Mithra, and appealed to the Christians as an appropriate day to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world." (Lincoln Library of Essential Information)

From these statements by reliable sources it is easy to see that the date of Christmas had its origin in a pre-Christian age among the pagans. It was adopted into a so-called "Christian" holiday by the Roman Catholic Church. Furthermore, the word "Christmas" is of Catholic origin. The word is derived from the medieval "Christes Masse," the mass of Christ, which is a corruption of the Lord's Supper. On December 25th, even until this day, the Catholics hold a special Mass for Christ. In time, "Christes Masse" came to be shortened to "Christmas."

Christmas, then, had its origin and authority in the Roman Catholic church.

- by David Padfield

Some Facts about Christmas

The word "Christmas" is formed by the combining of the words "Christ" and "mass", thus, "the Mass of Christ." The holiday as we know it originated with Roman Catholic ritual, although the ultimate origin of many of the customs of the season is not Catholicism, but. paganism.

No one knows the birth date of Jesus. We do not know it because God did not choose to reveal it. Early writers not only acknowledged ignorance of the date of Christ's birth, but also repudiated the idea of a special observance of his birth. "As late as 245 A.D. Origen ... repudiated the idea of keeping the birthday of Christ . . . Clement of Alexandria (ca.200 A.D.) mentions several speculations on the date of Christ's birth, and condemns them as superstitious. Some chronologists, he says, alleged the birth to have occurred in the 28th year of Augustus, on 25 Pachon (an Egyptian month); ie., May 20. Others assign it. to 24 or 25 Pharrnuth (April 19 or 20)." ([Encyclopedia Britannica](#)).

A consideration of the facts brings us to these important conclusions concerning the religious observance of Christmas, or any special ceremonies or observances surrounding the birthday of

Christ:

1. We do not know the date of Christ's birth. God did not choose to reveal it.
2. The celebration of Jesus' birth did not begin until several hundred years after the beginning of the church.
3. The special religious observance of Christ's birth is the combination of Roman Catholic and pagan traditions and rituals.
4. The Bible says nothing about such an observance, and it IS therefore unscriptural.

All that we do, in word or deed, is to be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Col.3:17). "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom.14:23). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom.10:17). Regardless of piety or sincerity involved, activities such as religious observance of Christmas or Easter are not authorized by God's word, and therefore are not pleasing to the Lord.

- by Tom Moody

Developing a Proper Attitude Toward Reading the Bible

Who can deny the importance of reading the Bible? It is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17), the light to guide us in this life (Ps. 118: 105), the standard by which we will be judged (Jn 12:48), and is able to save our souls (James 1:21).

And so, for most of us the question is not: 'Should we read the Bible?' We know that we should. But in all honesty, we have to admit that we don't read it as often or as thoroughly as we should. The reality of this situation reflects a basic problem of attitude on our part. Too often the few moments that we do spend in study of God's word are prompted from an 'I have to' viewpoint. We'll never be very good Bible students until we can approach this study with an 'I want to' attitude.

Someone has suggested that the Bible should be read in much the same way that you might read a love letter. Did anyone ever have to force you to read a love letter? Of course not! When such a letter arrives in the mail, you tear open the envelope and quickly read through the letter to get the main ideas. But then, before laying the letter aside, you read it again, this time more slowly, hoping to get even more meaning. You will probably read the letter again several times, pondering carefully over every word, before finally putting it away in some special place to be saved. Why all the interest in this letter? Because it is from someone you love. Now, have you ever thought about the Bible in this same way? It will affect your attitude toward this 'love letter' from God.

"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" (1 Tim. 4:13).

- by Greg Gwin