

Christmas Holiday Observance Part 1

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1 If the question is: *Should a believer in Christ observe the Christmas holiday?*

2 Then a follow-up question would be: *For what reason would a believer in Christ **not** celebrate the Christmas holiday that is universally accepted as the birth of the Christ-child?*

3 Two opinions have come about over the years—those who commemorate the birth of Jesus on that day, and those who do not celebrate it. Both have reasons for the opinions they hold and why they believe as they do.

4 *Christmas* is observed on December 25th while *Saturnalia* was celebrated around December 17th the winter solstice which marked the end of the planting season and celebrated the bounty of the harvest.

5 Christmas celebrates the birth of Christ and the salvation plan of redemption He came to give the world.

6 The Christmas holiday observed December 25th, then, has been universally accepted by the majority of Christians as the day Jesus was born.

7 It was around 336 AD that the Emperor Constantine declared Christ's birth an official Roman holiday. To not observe the holiday would appear to many to be anti-Christian.

8 It seems only right that the birth of our Savior should be recognized and observed—but in a proper and Scriptural way—which would be much different than society does today.

9 It should be observed in a way that keeps the Lord Jesus and what His coming to earth means at the forefront.

10 Not to recognize this holiday—however that is done—would be sending the wrong message by our actions—that we are an unbeliever or non-Christian, since the majority of Christian believers world-wide have accepted it as the day Jesus was born.

11 In addition, the majority of companies and employers close down business on December 25th, or they give the day off from work; some provide food and refreshments; others offer cash bonuses; or in other ways observe the holiday.

12 How could one think of December 25th as a regular workday if their employer closed their job down for that day? To refuse a Christmas bonus would be a personal insult to the boss.

13 How would it appear to those around us if gifts, acts of kindness, and cash bonuses were *accepted* but not *given* because of our trying to avoid the holiday?

14 Even though December 25th is observed by the majority as the day Jesus was born, the actual date could have been late summer or early autumn.

15 AV Luke 2:8 “*There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*” Sheep grazing on the hillsides would more likely be in September.

16 Knowing the exact date of Christ's birth should not be the deciding factor in whether we observe the holiday or not, but whether we desire to remember a day that the Lord Jesus came to visit in order to fulfill the salvation plan the Father put in place.

17 If we observe the Christmas holiday along with most of the Christians in the world, the important question is: *How should it be celebrated?* And *How would Jesus want us to remember the day He was born?*

18 The account of His birth is in two Gospels—Matthew and Luke—and Jesus would want us to read those accounts and to understand every aspect of His humble birth in Bethlehem.

19 We are to praise and glorify His name whenever possible, so He would surely want us to take advantage of this holiday to exalt His name—*Immanuel, God with us!*

20 The two sacraments in the Bible we are instructed to observe are *Baptism* and *Communion* or the Lord's Supper, but we should not ignore the two detailed accounts in the Books of Matthew and Luke that tell the story of the Birth of Jesus.

21 Most of us realize that the Christmas holiday has been commercialized over the years—and that greed, excess, and self-indulgence abound in today's society. Just because the world does this is no justification for a Christian to join them.

22 Instead, we should stop and think how we can eliminate the *worldly* aspects that have been introduced into the holiday in recent years.

23 It is a time to *slow down the pace* instead of *increasing the activities*. It may seem difficult to slow the frantic pace, but it is possible if we will place the matter before God in prayer.

24 There is much pressure to fulfill gift-lists, complete decorating, meal preparation, and to do many other such things, but we must slow the pace somewhere, and with God's help, eliminate the unnecessary and the excesses the world has accepted.

25 With a sincere desire to do so, we can observe the birth of Jesus as He would want us to observe it.

26 The Lord Jesus, who is our humble Servant, and whose likeness we are to attain with the Spirit's help, can enable us to *Appreciate What we Have*, instead of always wanting more and more.

27 Jesus would surely not approve of purchasing extravagant gifts like the world and going into serious credit-card debt.

28 He would *not* want us to work overtime hours so we can buy high-priced gifts that are often not needed or necessary. It is *not* the *reason for the season*.

29 As a believer in Jesus, we must take the matter to God in prayer and ask for His guidance in deciding on this issue—certainly asking for His wisdom concerning how to recognize this *divine event* and *miraculous birth* that should have a *deep* and *significant* meaning for us.

30 This time of the year should mean a time to *give*, to *share*, to bring *peace*; and a time to *treat everyone* in our family and outside the family, in a *kind* and *considerate* manner—making them feel *wanted*, *loved*, and *appreciated*.

31 Christmas is a time to remember how important it is that *God is with us* every moment, every day!

32 This presence of God is a reality with every believer in Christ, because Jesus came to be born on earth and to live among us. **John 1:14**, “*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*”

33 **Old Testament Prophecies on the Birth of Jesus**—**Numbers 24:17** “*A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.*”

34 **Isaiah 7:14** “*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*”

35 **Micah 5:2** “*Out of you, Bethlehem, will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.*”

36 **Deuteronomy 18:15** “*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him.*”

37 Many aspects of today's Christmas observance can parallel verses in Scripture—like **1 John 4:9**, “*This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.*”

38 **AV John 15:12** “*This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*”

39 In a society that is becoming increasingly secularized and self-centered, it is good to have an

annual remembrance of Jesus' humble beginning in Bethlehem.

40 We should remember the celebrated birth because “*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” **1 Timothy 1:15**.

41 Christmas is a time for the family to be together; to visit and enjoy one another's company; it is a time to communicate with friends; and a time to reflect on what our attitude towards others has been.

42 It is a time to forgive, forget, and be reconciled with friends who may have drifted away for one reason or another.

43 Doing this fulfills **2 Corinthians 5:19**, “*God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*”

44 Christmas is a time for *giving*; *forgiving*, and *loving* those around us. It is a time to remember we are celebrating the greatest Gift ever given—the Gift of God's Son.

45 **John 3:16**, “*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*”

46 God's greatest gift was a gift of *love* to an unworthy world. He *gave* because He *loved*—everyone, so *our* giving should reflect *His love* that He showed to us.

47 If we can focus on that, especially showing that example to the children, then this can be a most blessed and enjoyable holiday ever.

48 Only with God's help could we do this, for it isn't easy to focus on the important things during this season.

49 Satan makes it so easy to get caught up in the carnal aspects of the holiday. The observance has become very commercial; carefully merchandised; and overly materialistic.

50 Every year the frenzied buying gets worse. Most agree that today's society is filled with the

unnecessary, the insignificant, and the meaningless. All done, they say, to complete their gift list for people who already have too much.

51 We must ask; “*Does our giving reflect the spirit of Christ who gave of Himself for us because He loves us?*”

52 With God's help, we can show those around us what the true meaning of this observance really is. Only when we intentionally make room for Christ in our holiday celebrations, will this season have real meaning.

53 At the first Christmas, two groups came to visit the baby Jesus. The wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but the shepherds just brought themselves.

54 Both groups, however, worshiped the Lord Jesus! *That* is the true meaning of the observance!

55 They gave of themselves to God in dedication, love, reverence, and praise for the marvelous gift God gave them and the world when He sent His Son to save our soul!

56 And during this Christmas celebration of 2024, may it be the time we give *our* entire *life*—our *ways* and *words* and *attitudes*—to God for His control every day after and until He returns.

57 May this be the season to be confident and sure that through faith in His Son, we will receive the forever gift of Eternal Life through the sacrifice His Son made for us!

58 *That* is the *greatest of all Christmas gifts!*



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