**The Truth About Christmas**

*Colossians 3:17*

**Introduction**

1. It’s that time of year where we are hearing the phrases uttered all around concerning Christmas, and a connection it has with spirituality:
	1. “Remember the true meaning of Christmas”
	2. “Remember the reason for the season”
	3. “Put Christ back in Christmas”
	4. Etc.
2. These phrases imply that there is a distance growing in the general populous from an important religious observance ordained by God. Is this so concerning Christmas?
3. **Colossians 3:17** – We are to do all things in submission to Christ’s authority. Is Christmas authorized by Christ?
4. Let us consider the truth about Christmas.
5. The Truth About Christmas
6. The Birth Date of Jesus
	1. If we are to have an annual formal religious celebration of Jesus’ birthday we should be able to know when it is.
	2. Most would immediately affirm that the birth date of Jesus was December 25th, 1 A.D.
	3. Is this true though? No, the truth is that not even the exact year is known.
	4. Jesus was born between 7 B.C. and 4 B.C.:
		1. “When Christ was born, time was reckoned in the Roman Empire from the founding of the city of Rome. When Christianity became the universal religion over what had been the Roman world, a monk named Dionysius Exiguus, at the request of the Emperor Justinian, made a calendar, 526 AD, reckoning time from the Birth of Christ, to supersede the Roman calendar. Long after the Christian calendar had replaced the Roman calendar, it was found that Dionysius had made a mistake in placing the birth of Christ in year 753 A C U. (From the founding of Rome). It should have been 749 or a year or two earlier. So the reason we say that Christ was born in 4 BC is merely because the maker of the Christian calendar made a mistake of 4 or 5 years in coordinating it with the Roman calendar which it replaced.” (Halleys Bible Handbook, 436).
		2. If Dionysius’ original calculations were correct, then Herod the Great who is recorded as seeking to kill baby Jesus would have died 4 years or so before Jesus was born. (Placing such dating in conflict with scripture.)
	5. The month and day Jesus was born is even more difficult to determine: (Ultimately the information is unattainable)
		1. Most likely not December – more likely to be in the spring.
		2. **Cf. Luke 2:8** – Gives information about shepherds abiding the fields with the sheep during the birth of Christ.
		3. “This was commonly done. The climate was mild, and, to keep their flocks from straying, they spent the night with them. It is also a fact that the Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced…It is probable from this that our Saviour was born before the 25th of December, or before what we call “Christmas.”… But the exact time of his birth is unknown; there is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been fixed at each month in the year.” (Albert Barnes, Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, Luke 2:8)
		4. “…we find that the sheep were kept out in the open country during the whole of the summer. And as these shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumptive argument that October had not yet commenced, and that, consequently, our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could he have been born later than September, as the flocks were still in the fields by night. On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up.” (Adam Clarke, Luke 2:8)
		5. Other dates offered as a possibility include JANUARY 6TH, MARCH 25TH, JANUARY 10TH, and MAY 20TH.
		6. WE SIMPLY DO NOT KNOW – IF THE LORD WANTED US TO KNOW, HE WOULD HAVE TOLD US. (**cf. Deuteronomy 29:29** – secret things belong to God)
7. Why December 25th?
	1. Why is December 25th so widely accepted as Christ’s birthday? (Obviously not because there is factual support of that date.)
	2. "December 25 was first declared to be the birthday of Christ by Liberius, bishop of Rome in 354 A.D." (World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, page 1425).
	3. December 25th has a pagan background:
		1. “There is no certainty as to the month or day of the birth (of Christ). The Christmas date, December 25th, is first met with in the west in the 4th century (the eastern date was January 6th), and was then possibly borrowed from a pagan festival.” (ISBE, 3:1628)
		2. What pagan festival? – The Roman Saturnalia
			1. 7 Day Pagan festival in honor of Saturn. (December 17-24)
			2. December 25th was a day of worship of the Sun-God, Mathra.
			3. Liberius chose December 25th “Because of the feast of the sun, or winter solstice, a Roman feast which was traditionally celebrated at this time." (World Book Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, page 1425).
			4. “Despite the beliefs about Christ that the birth stories expressed, the church did not observe a festival for the celebration of the event until the 4th century. The date was chosen to counter the pagan festivities connected with the winter solstice; since 274, under the emperor Aurelian, Rome had celebrated the feast of the ‘Invincible Sun’ on December 25.” (Grolier Interactive)
8. Neither Jesus’ birthday, nor birthyear are known. There is not recorded an annual religious observance and celebration of Christ’s birth until the 4th century.
9. We see that Christ was not really ever in Christmas, but that He was put there by the Catholic church. The Bible does not place Christ in Christmas.
10. Is the religious observance of Christmas authorized?
11. No Authority for a Religious Observance of Christ’s Birth
	1. There is no scripture that gives a direct statement, command, necessary implication, or example for such an observance.
	2. NOTE: When God desired a memorial observance of some kind He made it clearly known to His people:
		1. Passover – **Exodus 12:6, 14** – 14th day, 1st month – annual
		2. Trumpets (memorial) – **Leviticus 23:24** – 1st day, 7th month – annual
		3. Atonement – **Leviticus 23:27** – 10th day, 7th month – annual
		4. Tabernacles (feast) – **Leviticus 23:39-44** – 15th day, 7th month – annual
		5. Sabbath – **Exodus 20:8-11** – 7th day of the week – weekly
		6. Lord’s Supper – **Matthew 26:26-29; Acts 20:7** – 1st day of the week – weekly
		7. If it was an annual observance, the month, and the day of the month were given. If it was a weekly observance, the day of the week was given.
		8. NOBODY KNOWS THE DAY OF CHRIST’S BIRTH, THUS IT IS NOT TO BE CELEBRATED. GOD WOULD HAVE TOLD US IF IT WERE IMPORTANT, AND IF HE WANTED THE OBSERVANCE. (**cf. Deuteronomy 29:29** – NOTE, THAT WE MAY DO)
			1. Christians before the 4th century did not observe Christmas.
			2. The observance came with apostasy.
	3. Silence does not authorize:
		1. **Hebrews 7:12-14** – Need for a different priesthood meant the need for a different law, because the OT was silent about priests from Judah. (All that was said was from the tribe of Levi.)
		2. The argument that God did not forbid such an observance does not permit the observance.
	4. Good intentions do not justify such an observance:
		1. **1 Samuel 15:22-23** – King Saul spared the Amalekites and offers their sheep and oxen as sacrifices to God. Samuel’s words show that such was unacceptable.
		2. **2 Samuel 6:6-7** – Uzzah tried to keep the Ark of the Covenant from falling but was struck dead by God. Transporting the Ark in a way contrary to God’s commands. Ark not to be touched.
		3. **Matthew 7:21-23** – Jesus will tell the workers of iniquity to depart from Him.
		4. Those who claim a Christmas service is spiritual, and has benefit are guilty of practicing SELF-IMPOSED RELIGION – **Colossians 2:16-17, 23**
	5. The kingdom of God is not about entertainment:
		1. The “Christmas programs” that churches put on can easily be placed in the category of entertainment.
		2. Work of the church – Evangelism, Edification, Benevolence of the saints.
		3. **Romans 14:17** – not about eating or drinking. (**cf. 1 Corinthians 11:22, 34** – have houses to eat in and drink in.)
	6. How does God want us to remember Jesus?
		1. **Matthew 1:21** – Jesus was born to save us from our sins.
		2. **Matthew 26:26-28** (Lord’s Supper) – Body and blood for our sins.
			1. In doing so He condemned sin – **Romans 8:3**
			2. Manifested to destroy such – **1 John 3:8**
			3. Manifested to take away sin – **1 John 3:5**
				1. Sin is lawlessness – **1 John 3:4**
				2. The religious observance of Christmas was not commanded by God, thus it is lawless.
				3. THE WAY GOD WANTS US TO REMEMBER JESUS ACTUALLY PROHIBITS US FROM RELIGIOUSLY OBSERVING HIS BIRTH, FOR SUCH IS WITHOUT LAW.
		3. Many like to remember Jesus as a baby. Babies don’t give out commands or punish evil doers. The just sit there looking cute.
		4. However, Jesus is one who will punish those who practice lawlessness. He died that we might be freed from such lives of sin.
12. Do we have authority to celebrate the Christmas holiday at all?
	1. Yes, celebrating the Christmas holiday is authorized as long as the one who does it maintains a pure conscience.
		1. **Romans 14:5-6** – be fully convinced.
		2. **Romans 14:14, 23** – if one observes a day while maintaining in his conscience that it is wrong to do so, that one sins.
		3. This discussion of observing days is obviously not concerning observing them religiously. To do so would be to transgress Christ’s law, which gives no authority for such – **Galatians 4:8-11**
	2. Observing the Christmas holiday simply, and not religiously, is not any different than observing – Thanksgiving, The 4th of July, Memorial Day, Valentine’s Day, Halloween, etc.

**Conclusion**

1. The truth about Christmas is that it has no legitimate connection to Christ.
2. God did not find it important that we know the birthdate of Christ. Else He would have told us.
3. God does not desire a religious memorial/observance of Christ’s birthday, or He would have commanded it.
4. Observing Christmas in a secularized fashion is not wrong. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.
5. In reality, instead of putting Christ back in Christmas, we should separate Christ from Christmas, for it was never God’s intention that He be put there.