

Church of Christ

... Heart to Heart ...

Last week I spoke of the Christmas season that everyone observes, tying it to the birth of Christ. I'm not trying to beat anything down but give us more insight to be careful what we follow and observe as a teaching from God. We looked last week at some facts and fiction. Let's observe another fact that so many have blindly followed thinking it is part of God.

One of the statements many make, and you will hear this many times, is "*Let's keep Christ in Christmas.*" There will be sermons preached by the religious world on this statement! Was Christ ever part of Christmas to begin with? The word "Christmas" comes from the words "Cristes Maesse" which means "the mass of Christ." In the second and third centuries, there were many pagan, religious practices. One practice was celebrating the "rebirth" of the sun in the northern skies. As the celebration was held, bonfires were lit to help the sun build its strength. On December 25, 274 AD, Caesar Aurelian declared the sun god Sol as the principle patron of Rome and built a temple to worship this sun god. In 354 AD, the Bishop Liberius of the Roman Catholic Church wanted to turn the people away from the pagan festival by holding a midnight mass called "Cristes Maesse" or "the mass of Christ." Bishop Liberius ordered this date set, December 25, as Christ's birth for the Roman Catholic Church and a celebration followed to offset the pagan worship of the sun god Sol. [World Book Encyclopedia & New Catholic Encyclopedia] The name was later changed to "*Christmas*" (1038 AD) in order to be accepted world wide.

What do we learn? Christ was never a part of Christmas. His name was never tied to the season. Man invented the season, tying it to Christ, and millions join in a celebration blindly without any thought or desire to learn the truth.

Paul warned the Galatian brethren about turning to weak and worthless things that enslave. He names them as days, months, seasons and years (Gal. 4:8-11). We need to be careful we don't get caught up in the same thinking and desires of the religious world around us. For those of us in Christ, we can enjoy our times together, family and the holiday. There's nothing wrong with the fun of gifts or putting up trees or lights. Just don't observe the day and time as a religious worship of Jesus. Let's make sure our worship and adoration of our Lord is founded in Biblical truth. Benjamin Franklin stated, "*How many observe Christ's birthday! How few His precepts! O! 'tis easier to keep holidays than commandments!*" Think about it!!!

Brent