

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture texts: **Colossians 2:16; Galatians 4:10.**
- B. We can all agree that the day which X was born of the virgin Mary was a great day (Lk. 2:10-11).
- C. We do not know the day, month, or year in which X was born. The Bible does not tell. Yes, the year is somewhat in doubt due possible calendar errors.
- D. The chances of it being winter are somewhat remote due to the shepherds being in their fields at night. This was only the case when the sheep were giving birth and this takes place in the Spring.
- E. Since the fourth century, Dec. 25th has been marked as the birth date of Jesus of Nazareth. The eastern Orthodox Church celebrates X's birth on Jan. 6 and the Armenian Church on Jan. 19.
- F. Let us make some common sense observations about Christmas and how a Xian should act in reference to it.

I. HISTORICALLY SPEAKING.

- A. The Christmas tree came from Germany where evergreen trees were worshipped because they symbolized eternal life.
- B. Mistletoe came from the Druids who venerated the plant, thinking it possessed magical powers.
- C. The Xmas stocking is borrowed from France where it was taught that a certain fairy filled the children's stockings during the night according to the past behavior--naughty children received only ashes.
- D. Xmas lights probably came from the "festival of lights" or "Hanukkah," a Jewish festival period in December that celebrates the rededication of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165BC.
- E. Santa Claus was the ghost of saint Nicholas, a bishop in Holland during the fourth century who had been very kind to children.
- F. As one can see many of the traditions of Xmas come from all over the world and have pagan and cultural backgrounds rather than religious ones.

II. RELIGIOUSLY SPEAKING.

- A. It should be mentioned that the term "Christmas" means "Christ's Mass" and comes from a Roman Catholic ritual. A special mass is performed in commemoration of the Lord's birth.
- B. Many in the church today point to this one fact and advocate that Christians should have absolutely nothing to do with Xmas because it is not commanded in Scripture.

III. FOUR OBSERVATIONS.

- A. First, just because something is not commanded in Scripture does not mean it is prohibited:
 1. We do many things that are good but are never commanded (business meetings, zone groups, church buildings, Sunday PM and Wed. PM Bible studies, ladies days, gospel meetings, etc.).
 2. Just because something is not commanded does not mean it is forbidden.
 3. There is a difference in un-scriptural and anti-scriptural.
- B. Second, although certain particulars surrounding Xmas arose out of pagan idolatry, I don't believe the idolatry necessarily remains:
 1. It seems that stockings, trees, mistletoe and lights have a cultural or festive connotation, not an idolatrous one.
 2. If we practiced the idolatry that accompanies these it would be wrong, but if we don't what's the problem?
 - a. For example check Gen. 35:4 and the wearing of earrings as amulets to keep away evil spirits. Who would believe that women wear them for this reason today, and who believes that modest earrings are unscriptural?

- b. Another example is the names "Sunday" and "Saturday" which stand for the "sun's day" and "Saturn's day." Are people guilty of worshipping the Roman gods of Apollo and Saturn when using these terms? I think not.
 - 3. Just because something once had an idolatrous connotation doesn't mean it still does for everyone.
- C. Third, is it good to rejoice with all the people regarding Jesus' birth, or is it not?
 - 1. The event itself was a time of great joy (Lk. 2:10).
 - 2. If something is good it is right, if it is evil it is wrong.
 - 3. To focus on an event for a particular period of time does not mean we worship it or give it extra special emphasis to make it wrong:
 - a. Some congregations will devote a whole month to prayer, but is this does not mean they don't the other 11 months.
 - b. Some congregations will set aside a month to honor elders, or deacons, or the elderly members. This is not wrong, and these groups are not slighted the other 11 months.
 - c. We honor Mothers in May, Fathers in June, and our country in July, yet we also honor them all, all year long.
 - 4. Therefore, what is wrong to give special honor to the birth of X, during a time when many others in the world do too? If something is good--do it; if something is bad it is evil--don't do it.
- D. Fourth, we abuse great opportunities for teaching the lost when we completely shun Xmas:
 - 1. The "Easter" story is told of a preacher who preached on why the the C of C did not observe Easter Sunday. One visitor told the preacher afterwards that he didn't believe in the resurrection either!
 - 2. We can give people the wrong impressions if we are not careful about the things we don't do and teach on.
 - 3. Jesus said if we ask for a fish, God will not give us a stone (Mt. 7:9,10). If we talk about the birth of X, and ignore Xmas we just might be doing just that.
 - 4. Let us seize opportunities to do good in the midst of sinful practices just as Paul did in Athens, among the idols and the unknown God.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Before we close let us review what we have studied and make a final observation;
- B. Four points of consideration:
 - 1. Just because something is not commanded in Scripture does not mean it is prohibited.
 - 2. Although certain particulars surrounding Xmas arose out of pagan idolatry, I don't believe the idolatry necessarily remains.
 - 3. Is it good to rejoice will all people regarding Jesus' birth, or is it not?
 - 4. We abuse great opportunities for teaching the lost when we completely shun Xmas.
- C, Most importantly we must remember that by no means should anyone make the observance of Xmas a commandment (Gal. 4:10), but on the other hand let us not prohibit such a practice by lack of commandment either (Col. 2:16; Rom. 14:4-6).
- D. Jesus came to man to save him. Will you now come to Jesus?
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.