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# Why Christians Shouldn't Celebrate Christmas

Eric V. Snow, sermonette, 12-25-2010, Ann Arbor, MI, UCG-AIA

Today is Christmas. So should we have the "Christmas spirit"? Should true Christians celebrate Christmas? Does God think it's the most wonderful time of the year? Is Jesus the reason for the season? Can we put Christ back into Christmas? Today let's review why we can't put Christ back into Christmas and why Jesus isn't the reason for the season.

S.P.S. Christians shouldn't observe Christmas because its customs came from paganism.

1. God doesn't want to be worshiped using customs developed for worshiping pagan gods.

Deut. 12:29-32

NIV: "The Lord your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, and after they have been destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." You must not worship the

Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods. See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.”

2. To re-label the pagan customs doesn't sanitize them.

God has a memory. So people can't arbitrarily take rituals used to worship other gods and then decree henceforth that they are for the true god starting now.

Marriage analogy: Suppose a newly married wife saw that her husband still had lots of photos of ex-girlfriends displayed prominently around the house. Wouldn't she feel annoyed, jealous, and insecure? Would she be convinced if the husband said, "Since we got married, I'm think about you instead of my ex-girlfriends whenever I look at those photos"? Why should we think the jealous God, the one demanding exclusive devotion, is any different?

Exodus 32:1-8

Notice that Israel's idolatry here made God very angry. Aaron proclaimed this celebration was a

feast to the Eternal. But that didn't change the fundamental reality that this was a corrupt pagan celebration. The re-labeling and rebadging of heathen customs won't persuade God to accept them.

Origin of bonfires, lights on Christmas trees: Pagans worried about the sun becoming weaker and weaker in winter as the winter solstice approached. They wanted to be certain that the source of life, the sun, was still around when winter ended. Sympathetic magic: People do a ritual hoping that it represents a future reality. Example: If you draw pictures of successful animal hunts on the cave wall, you'll have success in killing that deer or lion that you run into tomorrow. So they lit fires in order to help the sun come back.

Holly, mistletoe, and evergreen trees: Stay green all year around, defy the birth, life, rebirth cycle of nature and the seasons. Mistletoe a parasitic plant, grows on oak trees.

3. Since God is holy, pure, and undefiled, true Christians shouldn't use unholy, impure, and defiled customs of worship.

Since God wants true Christians to become like Himself, He doesn't want His followers adopting customs that make them less like Himself. To mix pagan customs with the worship of the true God defiles one's worship of God completely. It's like drinking arsenic mixed into good glass of water: The good part of the drink won't prevent you from being poisoned.

What else was being celebrated around the time of the winter solstice? Saturnalia: In Rome, December 17-24, included group orgies, drunkenness, legalized gambling, societal role reversals, like slaves acting like masters, and exchanging gifts. Both Augustus and Claudius tried to shorten it (to 3 days and to 5 days), but backed down when facing massive revolts by the masses. It's no wonder that the Catholic church tried to co-opt the day rather than attack it head-on after the time of Constantine and the Edict of Milan (313 A.D.)

Brumalia: Festival honoring the god of wine, Bacchus, normally on Dec. 25. "Bruma" meant "shortest day" in Latin.

December 25: Date of birth of Mithras, the god of light.

Modern Christmas celebrations mix the Roman traditions with the northern Germanic customs.

Santa Claus really based on the Nordic god Woden's riding a horse with 8 legs. He lived in the far north, in Valhalla, and had a big white beard. He would fly through the sky during the winter solstice (Dec. 21-25). He rewarded good children and punished bad ones. Likewise stories about the god Thor resembled Santa Claus in many ways. He also had a long white beard, lived in the far north, and liked to enter homes through chimneys since fire was sacred to him. He was portrayed as an old man with a jovial, friendly disposition. Unlike the other Teutonic gods who rode horses, he drove a chariot drawn by two goats, Cracker and Gnasher. So the tales about Santa Claus really go back to these pagan gods, for which Wednesday and Thursday were named. Should adults lie to their children so they believe in a fictional character who's based ultimately on stories about two pagan Germanic gods? (See Wikipedia as main source).

**In conclusion:** True Christians shouldn't celebrate Christmas. First, God doesn't want pagan customs to be used to worship him. Second, Relabeling pagan customs doesn't make them acceptable to God. Third, God wants His saints to be holy, pure, and undefiled by pagan rituals. Christians can't put Christ back into Christmas

because He wasn't the original reason for the season.

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