



Today's Sermons

Morning: What Think Ye of the Christ?

Evening: Song Service

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FOR THE RECORD

Sunday Bible Study	27
Sunday AM Worship	33
Sunday PM Worship	23
Wed. Bible Study	21
Offering	\$1584

Attendance Averages for Past 8 Years:

2009				
AM Bible Study:	25	AM Worship:	39	PM Worship: 24
Wednesday B.S.	25			
2010				
AM Bible Study:	29	AM Worship:	40	PM Worship: 27
Wednesday B.S.	27			
2011				
AM Bible Study:	29	AM Worship:	42	PM Worship: 27
Wednesday B.S.	27			
2012				
AM Bible Study:	32	AM Worship:	43	PM Worship: 28
Wednesday B.S.	25			
2013				
AM Bible Study:	30	AM Worship:	43	PM Worship: 28
Wednesday B.S.	24			
2014				
AM Bible Study:	31	AM Worship:	45	PM Worship: 27
Wednesday B.S.	24			
2015				
AM Bible Study:	31	AM Worship:	43	PM Worship: 28
Wednesday B.S.	26			
2016				
AM Bible Study:	32	AM Worship:	43	PM Worship: 28
Wednesday B.S.	27			

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

May God Richly Bless You As You Serve Him In the Coming New Year!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



A Weekly Publication of the
West Jefferson Church of Christ
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 West Jefferson NC 28694
 Phone: (336) 846-5615 | Email: info@wjchurchofchrist.org
 Volume IX December 25, 2016 Number 52

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Tim Canup

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Times of Services:

Sunday

Bible Study:... 10:00am

AM Worship:...11:00am

PM Worship:...6:00pm

2nd Sunday:.....1:30pm

Wednesday

Bible Study:.....7:00pm

Radio Program

Sunday:.....7:30am

“Back to the Bible”

AM 580 WSKS

93.5 FM

**We Extend A
 Warm & Cordial
 Welcome
 To All Our
 Visitors!**

Is It Wrong To Celebrate Christmas?

Todd Clippard

For most of the religious community, Christmas is celebrated as the day of Jesus’ birth. We often see signs and other items with phrases such as “Let’s keep Christ in Christmas,” or “Jesus is the reason for the season.”

What does the Bible have to say about Christmas? Should we celebrate the birth of Jesus? What is the origin of Christmas? These are some of the many questions we hope to answer in this study.

What is the origin of Christmas?

History records that some celebrated Jesus’ birth as far back as the 2nd century A.D., being noted in the reign of the Roman emperor Commodus, who died in A.D. 180. During the reign of Diocletian, (A.D. 284-305), a group of Christians had gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus in the city of Nicomedia. Diocletian ordered the building doors sealed and then set fire to the building, killing all those inside.

The date for the celebration of Jesus’ birth was not settled until the late 4th or early 5th century. Prior to that time, it was celebrated by the “Eastern Church” (now known as the Greek Orthodox Church) on January 6 in conjunction with the feast of Epiphany (the day of the visiting wise men). Some celebrated Jesus’ birth as late as April or May. A case has also

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been made for the date being October, based upon some history of the family of John the Baptist, the son of the priest Zacharias, “of the course of Abia” (Luke 1:5).

Whenever “official” discussion of setting a date began, dates were proposed from nearly every month of the year. The Catholic Bishop Liberious (circa A.D. 354) suggested the date of December 25, not because of any special significance, but because many parishioners were taking part in the pagan holiday festival of Saturnalia, or the feast of the pagan god Saturn. (Saturn was the god of agriculture.) This festival was instituted by decree of Caesar Augustus and was celebrated from December 17-23. It was reasoned that local church members could continue to celebrate the pagan holiday under the guise of celebrating the birth of Christ.

However, the Eastern Church continued to press for the date of January 6. The Western Church (now known as the Roman Catholic Church) was the more influential of the two, so the date was set at December 25. However, the feast of Epiphany was set at January 6 in order to appease the Eastern Church. There are twelve days from December 25 until January 5, thus “the twelve days of Christmas.” These twelve days are followed by the festival of Epiphany.

The word “Christmas” was not in existence until around the 11th century and comes from the Roman Catholic “Christ”+“Mass”. But as we have already seen, the celebration of Jesus’ birth predates the “official” origin of the Catholic Church by more than four hundred years.

What does the Bible have to say about Christmas?

In a word—NOTHING! There are two accounts of the birth of Jesus (Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-3). These accounts tell of Jesus’ ancestry, the conception of Mary by the Holy Spirit, the place and circumstances surrounding Jesus’ birth. There are also other confirmations of the fulfillment of prophecies contained in these accounts. However, there is no evidence whatsoever that Jesus’ birth was on or anywhere near December 25.

In fact, circumstances surrounding the wise men and shepherds suggest a different time of the year. December is in the middle of the rainy season in that part of the world. The Bible speaks of the “shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night” (Luke 2:8). The Bible also speaks of the wise men, who knew to seek out Jesus, “for we have seen his star in the east” (Matthew 2:2). These are not phrases which indicate the presence of the rainy season.

There is also no reference to the early church celebrating the birth of Jesus until after the apostolic age had ended (A.D. 150). Of all the commandments given to the church by the

apostles, there is no indication that Christians were to celebrate the birth of Jesus. If Christians were expected to celebrate Jesus’ birth, God would have told us the date. Jesus told the twelve in John 14:25-26, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” It is evident that Jesus did not see fit to reveal anything about His birthday to the disciples.

We believe everything concerning the life of Jesus is noteworthy, but the only thing Christians are commanded to remember on a regular basis is His death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). This remembrance is to take place each Lord’s day, which is Sunday (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:18,20).

Jesus taught that we are to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded (Matt. 28:20). We are also told to do all things, whether in word or deed, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). This means to do things by His authority. There is no authority for the celebration of Jesus birth. “Whosoever goeth onward, and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9). Paul warned the Corinthian brethren “not to go beyond the things which are written” (1 Corinthians 4:6). To celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25 or any other day violates these scriptures.

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“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:1 -4).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Dec 25 – Song Service
- Jan 1 Men’s Business Meeting – No Ladies’ Class
- Please give support money for Chinese orphans to Minnie Kennell