

# The Robison Reminder

Robison Street church of Christ  
Edna, Texas

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## Should We Celebrate Christmas?

by David Dann

With great concern the apostle Paul writes to the churches of Galatia saying, “You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain” (Gal. 4:10-11). There is no doubt that Paul here refers to the unauthorized religious observance of certain days or seasons by these Christians. In other words, the Galatians were guilty of formulating their own doctrines concerning the days, months, seasons, and years to which they would attach a special mandatory religious significance rather than simply seeking to fulfill the “law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2).



We would certainly want to avoid following after the example of the Galatians in this respect. For this reason, we must examine ourselves and take a closer look at whether or not we have fallen into the same condemned practice for which Paul rebuked them. Each year at this time individuals, nations, and religious groups around the world engage in the celebration of what is called “Christmas.” The intent of this article is to examine Christmas to the extent that we may know whether or not Christians can in good conscience participate in a celebration of such a day or season. Should we celebrate Christmas, or would we be falling into the same error as the Galatians by doing so?

### What is Christmas?

**1. Christmas is an annual religious observance of the birth of Christ.** The Christmas celebration was brought into existence as an official religious holy day by the Catholic bishop of Rome, Liberius, in 354 A.D. Therefore, it is a religious tradition rooted in the decrees of

the Roman Catholic Church rather than a practice sanctioned by Scripture. December 25<sup>th</sup> was reportedly selected as the day of observance in order offset the celebration of the pagan Roman sun god which took place on the same day. As Roman Catholicism grew so did the religious celebration of Christmas as Christ's birth. Eventually, the celebration of this holy day was adopted by the various Protestant denominations that are offshoots of Catholicism. It continues to be viewed as a religious commemoration of the birth of Jesus each year by most denominations.

**2. Christmas is also a national secular holiday.** While the English word "holiday" is a shortened form of "holy day," the word "holiday" has come to simply refer to a day on which one does not have to work, or a vacation. In our culture we have many such national holidays upon which people are freed from work in order to spend time with family and loved ones. Such national holidays include Thanksgiving, Labor Day, New Year's Day, and Christmas. To many, Christmas is a secular national holiday providing time for family activities and having no more religious significance than Labor Day.

### **Should We Celebrate Christmas As An Observance Of The Birth Of Christ?**

**1. Religious traditions must be approved by Scripture.** The word "tradition" is not necessarily a bad word. In fact, Paul refers to the apostolic teaching of the gospel as "the tradition" (2 Thess. 3:6). By definition a tradition is nothing more than an established practice or custom. Even religious traditions are perfectly right if they are in accord with the teaching of God's word. For example the New Testament teaches that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). We have made it our tradition to do so on Sunday morning and Sunday evening. It is right for us to have such a tradition because it is necessary in order to carry out God's expressed will.

**2. The religious traditions associated with Christmas did not originate with God's word.** While there are harmless and even helpful traditions, there are also unlawful traditions. The Bible refers to these unlawful religious observances as "traditions of men" (Col. 2:8; Mk. 7:6-8). Such traditions stand condemned as additions to the doctrine of Christ (2 Jn. 9). The celebration of Christmas as the birth of Christ is full of such traditions of men. These include the supposed date of Christ's birth, nativity scenes, the singing of Christmas carols, and the very notion that the church ought to engage in such a celebration when Scripture nowhere even hints at it. But isn't it okay since it is all done to glorify the Lord? No. Something must first be according to the revealed will of God before it can be done to his glory (Matt. 7:21-23).

## Should We Celebrate Christmas As A National Holiday?

**1. Do we have authority to engage in the non-religious traditions surrounding Christmas?** While we do not have Scriptural authority to engage in the religious traditions surrounding Christmas, there are many non-religious traditions that are approved by God. We have authority to give gifts to one another (Lk. 11:13; Acts 20:35; Eph. 4:28). We have authority to take time off work (1 Cor. 9:6). We find general authority in Scripture to spend time with family, eat, and do all of the other non-religious activities that are associated with the Christmas holiday tradition.

**2. What if someone cannot celebrate Christmas with a clear conscience?** A Christian who has been used to the idea of celebrating Christmas as a religious holy day may not be able to simply celebrate it as a national holiday without attaching such a significance to it. If that is the case, then he should not celebrate it at all, for to do so would be to act against his own conscience (Rom. 14:22-23). However, he must also guard against condemning those who are able to celebrate it non-religiously and in good conscience.

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**Conclusion.** We can be certain that if God intended for the church to celebrate Christ's birth he would have instructed us as to how to do so. While this is understood, we need to be able to distinguish between engaging in erroneous denominational religious practices and sharing a holiday with our families each December. The former is condemned while the latter is approved (2 Jn. 9).

- *Truth Magazine*, 10/20/05

This timely article was written by David Dann. Brother Dann is a faithful young preacher who labors with the Northeast church of Christ in Clearwater, Florida. Just this past week, we made arrangements with him to come and hold a gospel meeting for us in the Fall of 2012.

## Special Announcement!

Next Sunday morning's sermon will be on the subject of **Suicide**. We will be looking primarily at the Bible's answer to those who may be considering taking this tragic step.

## - News About Us -

**Angelina** and **Nina King** have both been diagnosed with lichen sclerosis. This is a genetic disease. The family has been told by doctors this condition is sometimes outgrown when one reaches puberty. Keep these girls and their family in your prayers.

There is a **singing** at Southbrooke this afternoon at 3:00.

Keep our shut-ins in your thoughts and prayers: **Stonewall Jackson, Wayne Johnson, Claford Smith, Tommy Smith, Jason Thompson, Herman Villarreal** and **Marie Wilkerson**.

### Serving Next Sunday Dec. 20th

- Morning -

Announcements: **Trey Wilke**  
Song Leader: **Danny Linden**  
Opening Prayer: **Frank Browne**  
Closing Prayer: **Chris Tindell**  
Scripture Reading: **Tyler Sample**

- Evening -

Announcements: **Trey Wilke**  
Song Leader: **Danny Linden**  
Opening Prayer: **Jeremy Wilson**  
Closing Prayer: **James Hurt**

### Wednesday (Dec. 23rd)

Song Leader: **Danny Linden**  
Opening Prayer: **Robert Volkmer**  
Closing Prayer: **Frank Browne**  
Invitation: **Jim Frazier**

### Robison Street church of Christ

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[www.ykc.com/cofc/](http://www.ykc.com/cofc/)

- Sunday -

Bible Study 9:30 AM  
Morning 10:30 AM  
Evening 6:00 PM

- Wednesday -

Bible Study 7:30 PM

elders:

Sherrel Mercer - 782-5678  
Steve Wilson - 782-2274

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Heath Rogers - 782-2844