

Pentecost, Christmas, And Other “Holy Days”

Acts 20:1-7, 13-16

Introduction:

- A. Paul, a Christian in a Jewish and pagan influenced society.
 - 1. Kept “Lord’s Day” in Troas then headed for Jerusalem for Pentecost.
 - 2. What about Pentecost? Other Jewish holy days?
 - 3. What about eating meat offered to idols? (cf. 1 Cor. 8).
- B. New Testament Christians in Catholic and pagan influenced society.
 - 1. Calendar rooted in paganism.
 - 2. Holidays rooted in Catholicism: Easter, Christmas, Good Friday, etc.
- C. Facts about Christmas:

Discussion:

I. Christmas Is Not Divinely Authorized.

- A. “Christmas” neither mentioned nor described in N.T.
- B. Date of Christ’s birth not revealed. (Cf. Deut. 29:29).
- C. No special observance commanded.
- D. Human tradition rather than doctrine of Christ. (Cf. Matt. 15:9; 2 John 9-11; Gal. 1:8, 9; 4:8-11; Rev. 22:18-19).

II. Christmas Is Rooted in Catholicism and Paganism.

- A. Catholic Marks.
 - 1. Christ-mass — Officially “Feast of nativity of our Lord.”
 - 2. Pope Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus) — died 867
- B. Pagan Marks.
 - 1. December 25 — pagan sun festival.
 - 2. December 17-24 — Saturnalia: Merrymaking and exchange of gifts.
 - 3. January 1 — Kalends of January: Homes decorated, lights, greenery, gifts.
 - 4. Yule Tide — Celtic rites: yule log, fir trees.

III. Christmas Is of No Religious Significance to Many Christians.

- A. Like non-ceremonial washing before eating. (Matt. 15:9).
- B. Like non-religious observance of Jewish National laws and customs by Paul.
 - 1. Shaved head and vow. (Acts 21:20-26).
 - 2. Circumcision (Acts 16:3; Gal. 2:3).
- C. Like eating meat offered to idols, but not “as meat offered to idols.” (1 Cor. 8:7; 10:27,28).
- D. A special time of national, community and family closeness and good will.

Conclusion:

- A. Let us be careful about religious observances: Xmas pageants, Religious Xmas songs.
- B. Let us be careful with non-religious observance: Stumbling block; excesses; cut church contribution.