

The Origins Of Various “Christian” Holidays

I have been researching this subject for several years now, especially regarding the Christmas holiday. The more I examine this issue and the more I observe the broad spectrum of people who celebrate these holidays, the more I think that something is not right. Too many people really enjoy these supposedly Christian holidays, people who don't at all enjoy talking to me about Christ or the Bible. I guess I believed other Christians to some extent who said that if the Bible does not expressly forbid something, specifically, then it is not wrong but more a matter of conscience for that individual. However, when looking at 2 Kings 17:15 recently, I came to the conclusion that such reasoning was faulty. I started to realize that there are many things we do that we do for no other reason than everyone else is doing it and perhaps it seems harmless or even helpful. So we convince ourselves that the good outweighs the bad, not necessarily because it really does, but perhaps because, if we convince ourselves, then we won't have to worry about going against the “norm” in our families and in our society. We are taking the path of least resistance (perhaps subconsciously). If we are careful in our study of scripture we will find things we don't want to find. We will find commandments of God that require us to change if we are to be obedient to Him in all things. Regarding holidays we find several passages indicating the seriousness of doing something that God does NOT command His people to do. For example:

“Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.” [Isaiah 1:14]

Here, God is condemning people who think they are pleasing Him with their religious festivals. Matthew Henry's commentary on this passage is rather insightful: “Judea was desolate, and their cities burned. This awakened them to bring sacrifices and offerings, as if they would bribe God to remove the punishment, and give them leave to go on in their sin. Many who will readily part with their sacrifices, will not be persuaded to part with their sins. ... The most costly devotions of wicked people, without thorough reformation of heart and life, cannot be acceptable to God. He not only did not accept them, but he abhorred them.” [1]

There are other passages in the Bible that don't specifically deal with holidays (feast days) but very much relate to God's people doing things He did not command them to do, namely where Nadab and Abihu offered incense in a way that God did not command them to do:

“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. 2 And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died

before the LORD.” [Leviticus 10:1-2]

Also, we see God’s wrath on Uzzah who attempted to steady the ark of the covenant when it was not his responsibility to do that since He was not a priest:

“And when they came to Nachon’s threshingfloor, Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. 7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.” [2 Samuel 6:6-7]

“Here we see the danger it is to follow good intentions, or to do anything in God’s service without his express word.”[2] God has reasons for why He does NOT command us to do various things. If we are diligent in our studies, we will understand those reasons because we will come to know the heart of God. We will come to know the Biblical patterns for living and why these patterns are important. **We will come to know that if we cannot find an express commandment to do something that the heathen around us are doing, we better not do it.**

When we participate in holiday celebrations that the lost are reveling in, we blur the distinction between what a biblical Christian believes and what a false-Christian believes to the point where the unsaved start to assume that their religion is not much different than ours (true Christianity) and so they must be right with God because, after all, they celebrate the same religious holidays that we celebrate. In God’s view of things ***it is vital that His people make a very clear distinction*** between the holy and the profane, between true worship and vain (useless and even offensive) religious works:

“And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.” [Ezekiel 44:23]

True worship (mentioned by Jesus in John chapter 4, verses 19 to 24) involves living obediently to God every day through the power of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer, not through our own goodness and not according to when the rest of the world decides its time to act semi-religious.

This brings us to 2 Kings 17:15:

“And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.” [2 Kings 17:15]

Many Bible-believing Christians don’t realize that by celebrating religious holidays that the unsaved celebrate, they are following after the heathens who

are in the majority and who are dictating for the most part, what is to be celebrated, when it is to be celebrated and how it is to be celebrated, when the Bible should be dictating such things. Christians need to be content without such “celebrations” just as ancient Israel needed to be content with manna in the desert and content with other things that God provided for them.

There are many well-meaning and sincere people practicing so-called “Christian” holidays. However, several points must be noted:

The roots and customs associated with these holidays are anything but Christian.

Most people practicing these holidays are worshipping a God and a Christ who does not exist, a God and a Christ who is a creation of the vain imaginations of men, not a God who will someday judge them for their sins and cast them into hell.

For a true Christian to associate themselves with these holidays is to give lost false-Christians a false sense of security and to imply that these false-Christians are legitimate believers by virtue of their participation in these holidays.

There are probably very few people celebrating Christmas, with its cute little Christ-child, who view Christ as Lord of every aspect of their lives and as one who hates the sin and the sinner - and who boldly declares in His word (the Bible) that:

“The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.” [Psalms 5:5-6]

How many of the “nice” people around us realize that in the above verses, God is speaking to them - and to all of us? The God of the Bible is a very holy God whose hatred for sin is as great as His love of righteousness. To meet Him unprepared on Judgment Day is to meet Him as His enemy as pointed out by the Apostle Paul after God saved him and those he was writing to:

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” [Romans 5:10]

Make sure your God and your Christ really exists! Start reading the Bible (preferably the King James Version) and find out who the Judge of all the earth is, before it is too late and you find yourself among those who will be saying to the mountains and rocks:

“Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” [Revelation 6:16-17]

God doesn't forgive a lifetime of sins just because you celebrate a few religious holidays each year and are good in your own eyes. People who think

such things are among those who will hear Christ say this to them on Judgment Day:

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”
[Matthew 7:21-23]

The more we study the Bible the more we are going to come to see that we can't just assume the religious leaders around us are correct in what they preach and practice. May the Good Lord richly bless you as you “test the spirits” [1 John 4:1], “prove all things” [1 Thessalonians 5:21], and as you “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” [2 Timothy 2:15].

REFERENCES

[1] Matthew Henry Concise Commentary on the Bible, notes on Isaiah 1:10-14.

[2] 1599 Geneva Bible footnotes on 2 Samuel 6:7.