

Answer Christmas Questions - with Humility

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Introduction:

I'd like to share text message I sent to a few people this week:

I'm beginning to work on my message for Sabbath and believe "meat in due season" (Mat 24:45) is to give another message on Christmas.

Is there any aspect more than others that should be addressed? I feel like most people know the history... but what should I address that would be relevant and helpful? Any suggestions from your perspective?

I know that nearly all of you understand, and have probably looked into... the origins of Christmas and are no longer celebrating Christmas. The information about the origins of Christmas are relatively easy to find. All you gotta do is ask Google or Siri.

When typing in "origins of Christmas", Google starts suggesting how to complete the query : ornaments, tree, tree pagan, songs, music, carols, traditions, stockings, traditions, lights, elf, elves,

It is easy to find sources that refute many of the traditions celebrated today:

Origins of Christmas from Christianity.com:

*The traditional date of December 25 goes back as far as A.D. 273. **Two pagan festivals honoring the sun were also celebrated on that day, and it is possible that December 25 was chosen to counteract the influence of paganism.** To this day, some people feel uncomfortable with Christmas because they think it is somehow tainted by the pagan festivals held on that day. But Christians have long believed that the gospel not only transcends culture, it also transforms it. In A.D. 320, one theologian answered this criticism by noting, "We hold this day holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the sun, but because of him who made it."*

Over time, December 25th became widely accepted as the symbolic date for celebrating the birth of Jesus, and Christmas Eve, on December 24th, became the evening preceding the main celebration. Many cultures around the world observe Christmas Eve with various traditions, including special meals, church services, and the exchange of gifts.

*Having said that, you may ask, **"Does it really matter?" In one sense, of course, the answer is no.** No doctrine of the Christian faith rests upon knowing the exact day and year of Christ's birth. And no stress is put upon his birth date in the New Testament. No one is ever told to celebrate Christmas. The emphasis always rests on the fact of his birth, not the date. But that doesn't tell the whole story. Christianity is a faith based on certain historical facts. Let us, on this Christmas Eve, rejoice in this great truth:*

"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" ([Luke 2:11](#)).

Another example: When was Jesus born, from Christianity.com:

*Based on the Bible text and knowledge of the priestly courses, we can estimate that Jesus was born around the time of **Tishri**, which falls in mid to late September. This approximation is reached by starting at the conception of John the Baptist, which occurred in Sivan (June). Then, we count forward six months to arrive at Gabriel's announcement of the conception of Jesus, which happened in Kislev (December). Finally, we count forward nine more months, which is the average time it takes for human gestation, to reach Tishri (September) when Jesus was born.*

What does the Bible say? Does it matter to God?:

Deuteronomy 12:30 NKJV - "take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.'

NLT: do not fall into the trap of following their customs and worshiping their gods. Do not inquire about their gods, saying, 'How do these nations worship their gods? I want to follow their example.'

Deuteronomy 12:31 NKJV - "You shall **not** worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

Deuteronomy 12:32 NKJV - "**Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

Jeremiah 10:10 NKJV - But the LORD [is] the true God; He [is] the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth will tremble, And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

God wants His people to obey Him and worship HIM. HE is the Creator. He doesn't want us worshipping what He or we have created.

But Satan wants to be worshipped:

Isaiah 14:12 NLT - "How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world.

Isaiah 14:13 NLT - For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north.

Isaiah 14:14 NLT - I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.'

Revelation 13:4 NLT - They worshiped the dragon for giving the beast such power, and they also worshiped the beast. "Who is as great as the beast?" they exclaimed. "Who is able to fight against him?"

Revelation 13:8 NLT - And all the people who belong to this world worshiped the beast. They are the ones whose names were not written in the Book of Life before the world was made--the Book that belongs to the Lamb who was slaughtered.

Revelation 13:12 NLT - He exercised all the authority of the first beast. And he required all the earth and its people to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed.

Revelation 13:15 NLT - He was then permitted to give life to this statue so that it could speak. Then the statue of the beast commanded that anyone refusing to worship it must die.

But we understand that we should not worship Satan or the Beast or follow practices that are steeped in pagan origin.

Specific Purpose of This message:

Today I want us to focus and consider the attitude and approach of how we as "non Christmas keepers" respond to those still keeping Christmas.

Need:

Do we respond in an arrogant, self righteous manner or in a manner that represents our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?

Is our initial reaction and response the same as how Jesus Christ would respond. Jesus commissioned us to make disciples and teach the world His way. As His servants we need to respond as He would.

Matthew 28:19 NKJV - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 NKJV - "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen.

He wants us to make disciples of all. He wants all to come to repentance.

Acts 17:30 NKJV - "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

Has our knowledge of the truth "puffed us up"?

1 Corinthians 8:1 NLT - Now regarding your question about food that has been offered to idols. Yes, we know that "we all have knowledge" about this issue. **But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that strengthens the church.**

1 Corinthians 8:2 NLT - Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much.

1 Corinthians 8:3 NLT - But the person who loves God is the one whom God recognizes.

1 Corinthians 8:4 NLT - So, what about eating meat that has been offered to idols? Well, we all know that an idol is not really a god and that there is only one God.

1 Corinthians 8:5 NLT - There may be so-called gods both in heaven and on earth, and some people actually worship many gods and many lords.

1 Corinthians 8:6 NLT - But we know that there is only one God, the Father, who created everything, and we live for him. And there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life.

1 Corinthians 8:7 NLT - However, not all believers know this. Some are accustomed to thinking of idols as being real, so when they eat food that has been offered to idols, they think of it as the worship of real gods, and their weak consciences are violated.

1 Corinthians 8:8 NLT - It's true that we can't win God's approval by what we eat. We don't lose anything if we don't eat it, and we don't gain anything if we do.

1 Corinthians 8:9 NLT - **But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble.**

1 Corinthians 8:10 NLT - **For if others see you--with your "superior knowledge"--eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol?**

1 Corinthians 8:11 NLT - **So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer for whom Christ died will be destroyed.**

1 Corinthians 8:12 NLT - And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ.

1 Corinthians 8:13 NLT - So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live--**for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.**

So how do we respond to others when they ask sensitive questions about their belief or ours?

Luke 17:1 NKJV - Then He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe [to him] through whom they do come!

Luke 17:2 NKJV - "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, **than that he should offend one of these little ones.**

I believe it is important that we respond to others in such a way that helps them come to repentance. God has opened our eyes to His truth. But that does not give us the prerogative to look down on others who have not yet come to the same truth He has shared with us. Rather, it should make us compassionate toward them, and patient with them, as we recognize and remember that we were in the same position and mindset before God called us.

Acts 17:29 NKJV - "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.

Acts 17:30 NKJV - "**Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked**, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

Acts 17:31 NKJV - "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

When talking to those who have not yet come to the knowledge of God and His truth, we must remember that we are the slaves of Christ. And we must keep the direction and purpose He has given us in mind during all our interactions with others. Our behavior needs to lead them to God's way - NOT discourage them from it.

2 Timothy 2:24 NET - And the Lord's slave must not engage in heated disputes but be kind toward all, an apt teacher, patient,

2 Timothy 2:25 NET - correcting opponents with gentleness. Perhaps God will grant them repentance and then knowledge of the truth

2 Timothy 2:26 NET - and they will come to their senses and escape the devil's trap where they are held captive to do his will.

We need to be praying and asking for wisdom, that God would guide our words and actions, so that we can truly help others come to the knowledge of the truth.

In the KJV gentleness in verse 25 is translated *meekness*. In the NKJV it is translated *humility*. The Amplified adds the word *courtesy*. Those words should describe how we respond to all. We need to be an example of God's spirit in how we deal with people. They are examining us to see what spirit we are of - they are testing us!

We need to be exhibiting the spirit of truth, but also the other fruits of God's spirit!

John 14:17 NKJV - "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 15:26 NKJV - "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

John 16:13 NKJV - "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own [authority], but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

1 John 4:6 NKJV - We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1 John 4:1 NKJV - Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits**, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

But also exhibiting the other fruits of God's holy spirit:

Galatians 5:22 NKJV - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

Galatians 5:23 NKJV - gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:24 NKJV - And those [who are] Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Galatians 5:25 NKJV - If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:26 NKJV - Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

1 Peter 1:22 NKJV - Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

Conclusion:

So, as God gives you opportunity to answer people's questions about Christmas or any other aspect of His way of life, let us be determined that we answer in a manner that reflects we are Christ's slaves or servants and answer in a humble, meek and gentle manner that will not get in the way of God granting them repentance and coming to an even greater understanding of His awesome plan for all mankind!

If you respond in a loving, humble manner, you will be setting a positive example and possibly helping a person become a disciple of Christ:

Matthew 28:19 NKJV - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Matthew 28:20 NKJV - "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age." Amen.

Additional Resources:

Encyclopedia Britannica article on Christmas

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Christmas>

Beyond Today Article: Would Jesus Observe Christmas?

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/beyond-today-magazine/beyond-today-magazine-november-december-2024/would-jesus-observe>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/beyond-today-magazine/beyond-today-magazine-november-december-2023/christmas-untold-story>

<https://www.ucg.org/good-news/good-news-magazine-january-february-1996/christmas-reconsidered>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-study-tools/bible-study-aids/holidays-or-holy-days-does-it-matter-which-days-we-11>

<https://www.ucg.org/good-news/good-news-magazine-november-december-2000/christmas-christ-surprising-story>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/when-people-say-have-merry-christmas-how-should>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/blogs/keeping-family-when-you-dont-keep-christmas>

<https://www.ucg.org/good-news/good-news-magazine-november-december-2005/why-some-christians-dont-celebrate-christmas>

<https://www.ucg.org/good-news/good-news-magazine-november-december-2002/was-christ-born-christmas-day>

<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/jesus-christ/when-was-jesus-born.html>

<https://www.ucg.org/watch/beyond-today/beyond-today-television-program/when-was-jesus-born?source=textbox>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/beyond-today-magazine/beyond-today-magazine-november-december-2016/how-can-you-kick-christmas?source=textbox>

<https://www.ucg.org/learn/bible-study-tools/bible-study-aids/holidays-or-holy-days-does-it-matter-which-days-we-4>