

# What About Christmas?

*By Ron Boatwright*

How did December 25<sup>th</sup> come to be celebrated? Christmas originated as a pagan religious holiday. Ancient Roman pagans first introduced the holiday of Saturnalia which was a week long period of lawlessness celebrated December 17-25. The ancient Greek writer and historian, Lucian, describes the festival Saturnalia holiday observance as the time when pagans honored their god, Saturn. Each Roman community selected a victim whom they forced to indulge in food and other physical pleasures throughout the week. At the festival's conclusion on December 25<sup>th</sup> the innocent victim was brutally murdered. In addition to the human sacrifice there was widespread intoxication, gambling, and sexual indulgence, with people going from house to house naked while singing (a precursor of modern caroling).

In the fourth century AD, "so-called Christianity" imported the Saturnalia festival hoping to lure the pagan masses to accept Christianity and promising them they could continue to celebrate Saturnalia as Christians. So man takes this disgusting pagan holiday and makes it the supposed birthday of Christ. The problem is there is nothing Christian about Saturnalia. The earliest Christmas holidays were celebrated by drinking, sexual indulgence, and singing naked in the streets. Some holiday?

We do rejoice that Christ was born of a virgin just as God promised in Isaiah 7:14. But we rejoice even more "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The word "Christmas" is not in the Bible. The Bible has absolutely nothing to say about December 25<sup>th</sup> as the birthday of Christ.

December 25<sup>th</sup> is the least likely day of the year for Christ to have been born. We read in Luke 2:8 of the angel of the Lord appearing to the "shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night". Shepherds would not be keeping watch over their flocks in the fields at night in Palestine in December and January because it is usually cold and rainy. With the shepherds tending their flocks at night in the field indicates Jesus was born during the warmer seasons. If God wanted us to know the date of Christ's birth, He would have told us in the Bible. God has not authorized us to celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday.

For most of the religious world, Christmas has been set aside by man as a "holy day" to celebrate the birth of Christ. Theatrical and dramatic performances entertain large crowds of people attending Christmas church services, but they don't come back any other time of the year. People want to celebrate Christmas as Christ being a babe in a manger and when Christmas is over they want to put Him in a box until next year and live their lives the rest of the year as they please. Many people celebrate Christmas with drunken parties, just as the pagans celebrated Saturnalia. Christmas is about pleasing men and not God. What do you think God thinks of all of this? In Galatians 4:10-11 Paul is condemning the Christians at Galatia for observing religious days without God's authorization. "You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have labored for you in vain."

For man to set up and observe a religious holiday would be adding to the word of God. We are severely warned not to add to what God has said. "If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues written in this book" (Revelation 22:18). Man will lose his soul in Hell by adding to what God has said. We are commanded, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). To do something in the name of the Lord Jesus is to do it by His authority. Where in the Bible has the Lord authorized us to celebrate Christmas, December 25<sup>th</sup> or any other day as His birthday?

Since we do not have the authority from the Lord, the Christian should not celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday. A Christian can celebrate Christmas as a secular holiday just as we celebrate Labor Day, Memorial Day, or July 4<sup>th</sup>, but without any religious significance. We can give gifts, send holiday greetings, decorate, etc., but we have not been authorized to celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday.