

## A Hard Pill to Swallow

As our nation debates whether to say Happy Holidays or Merry Christmas, I would like to offer yet another view. May I begin by saying that I am a believer in Jesus Christ. He is my soon coming King. Although I fail Him daily, He is the one that I long to please in all that I do. Having said this, you will probably be surprised to learn that I don't celebrate Christmas. After the initial shock to such a statement, the obvious question that anyone would ask is this: Why? Why would someone who loves the Savior not participate in this beautiful time of pageantry, color and music, much of which celebrates the birth of the King he worships? Why would such a one turn away from a day that has brought so many precious memories with family and friends throughout their lifetime? One whose children heard about the birth of the Messiah year after year and would shout "Happy Birthday Jesus!" before anyone could open presents. One whose home was decorated beautifully with greenery and Christmas trees in practically every room. I loved Christmas! In my heart and mind, Jesus was the reason for the season.

This is the message that many of us have been taught regarding December 25<sup>th</sup>. With all of that said, imagine the shock of discovering that this holiday you have cherished your whole life actually has nothing to do with the Savior you worship. In fact, you find out that it's roots run deep in the occult, something that you are to abhor as a believer in Jesus Christ. You feel hurt, angry and deceived all at the same time. You wonder why nobody told you. You feel like a fool for the times you agreed with those who said "Let's put Christ back in Christmas!" because you know now that He was never there to start with. And the worst part of all is wondering...how do I respond to this? Do I just ignore these things and continue on as before? Do I stop celebrating Christmas altogether? If I do, what will people think? What will my Christian brothers and sisters think? Believe me, I know that what I'm declaring to you is a bitter pill to swallow.

Most Christians are able to handle hearing about Halloweens roots in the occult and maybe we can even accept that Easter has pagan ties (hence the bunnies and the eggs) but we don't want to hear this stuff about Christmas. It's the most wonderful time of the year, so the song goes! However, the all-important question that the followers of the babe in the manger must ask concerning this celebration is this: Is Jesus pleased?

I mean, if we are truly honoring Jesus' birth, and He really is the reason for the season, isn't it critical to make sure that He is pleased with what He observes? To find the answer we will have to see what God's word says concerning the issue, since we know that obedience to the Father and His word will most definitely be pleasing to the Son. In Deuteronomy 12:4, God commands His people not to worship Him with pagan things. Notice that He didn't say "not to worship pagan things" but "not to worship *Him* with pagan things". You see, we as believers in Christ are not to take items that are used in false worship systems and incorporate them into our worship of the LORD. This is called syncretism. God hates syncretism!

Most of us have never imagined that many of the items used in the celebration of Christmas actually have ties to occult worship. However, this is true! Since it is true, can God really be happy with His children mixing trees, yule logs, Santa Claus and mistletoe into the worship and adoration of His Son? The Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 6:16-

17 that believers should have no part with idols and that we are to come out from among those that do.

Just on a personal level ask yourself this question: Would you enjoy your birthday party if it were celebrated on the wrong day... everyone but you received gifts... and the decorations offended you? It sounds like “a great time is had by all” except the guest of honor! Isn’t that what happens at Christmas? *We* love the decorations and *we* love all the gifts and *we* have even decided the day of His birth! In reality, isn’t Christmas really a whole lot more about us than Jesus?

Like me, most of you have celebrated this season without knowing where it came from. You have innocently thought that you were observing the birthday of the Son of God. The sad fact is that it has nothing to do with Him. May I ask you the same question that I asked myself after hearing these things; how will you respond? You can pass it off as the words of some fanatic who wants to see a demon in every corner or you can find out for yourself if these things are so. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ and you find these things to be true, seek the LORD regarding what to do. After all, pleasing Him is what really counts!

In conclusion; I know that saying, “Christmas has nothing to do with Jesus” does not have the same ring to it that “He’s the reason for the season” does, but it rings with something that the last statement cannot....truth!