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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

### **CHRISTMAS: FROM GOD OR MEN? REVISITED**

In a recent letter to the editor one of our readers expressed his disagreement with a previous article on the subject of “Christmas.” We appreciate any person who is willing to discuss what the Bible teaches and who will stand up for his or her convictions. There is far too little such discussion taking place in our world today. All of us should be like the Bereans of whom it is said in Acts 17:11, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and **searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so.**”

In his response our reader did not answer the question of whether the religious tradition of “Christmas” was from God or men. Instead, he attempted to place its religious observance in the realm of “Christian liberty” based upon Romans 14:4-6 and Galatians 5:13. He stated that “Paul seemed less concerned with making lists of which religious practices were ‘authorized’ or not than he was with promoting Christian liberty.” We readily admit there are things which fall into the realm of Christian liberty which do not impact salvation. However, religious traditions originated by men are not among them. Read this list of things written by the inspired Paul which are unauthorized: “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, **according to the tradition of men**, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.” (Col. 2:8). Jesus condemned the human religious traditions of the Jews stating, “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:9; See also Matt. 23). It is obvious that the Bible does explicitly forbid the practice of the religious traditions originated by men and that such do not fall within the realm of “Christian liberty. History tells us that “Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church, and before the fifth century there was no consensus as to when it should come in the calendar....” (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 5, p. 641). In addition, history indicates that the religious observance of the Christ Mass “originated with pagans as a feast day to their sun-god Mithra. It was changed to a ‘Christian Holy Day’ by the Roman Catholic Church.”

The purpose of our first article on this subject was not to question either the sincerity or the motives of those who accept the religious celebration of Christmas. Our purpose was to emphasize that for any religious practice to be acceptable to God it must have first been authorized by Him in His Word. In addition, to put the emphasis upon the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins which God has authorized us to do each first day of the week in partaking of the Lord’s Supper. We encourage each reader to” search the scriptures” and answer for yourself the question of whether the religious celebration of Christmas is from God or men.