

WHY DO WE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

- I. The SIGNIFICANCE of Christ's COMING
 - A. It is the FOCAL POINT of HISTORY
 - 1. ANTICIPATED throughout the Old Testament (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; 9:6)
 - 2. INTRODUCES the New Testament (Matt. 2:1-11; Lk. 2:1-18)
 - B. It is the FULFILLMENT of PROPHECY
 - 1. To SATISFY the LAW (Matt. 5:17-18)
 - 2. To REVEAL the FATHER (John 14:6-7)
 - 3. To PROVIDE a SACRIFICE (Heb. 9:27-28)
 - 4. To conquer SIN, SATAN, and DEATH (Rom. 8:1-2; Heb. 2:14; 1 Cor. 15:55-57; 2 Tim. 1:10)
- II. The CONTROVERSY over the DATE
 - A. It is impossible to establish PRECISELY
 - 1. Confusing CALENDARS
 - 1. HEBREW calendar used 360 DAY year
 - 2. JULIAN calendar, adopted in 45 BC, adjusted 10 DAYS by Gregory in 1582, still imprecise
 - 2. Birth records DESTROYED by Roman invasion in AD 70
 - B. It is sometimes expedient to SELECT a date
 - 1. Fourth Century church in the WEST settled on DECEMBER 25

2. Fourth Century church in the EAST settled on JANUARY 6
- C. Since the mid-19th century there have been CHALLENGES to the date
1. Claims coincidence with PAGAN HOLIDAYS
 2. Claims “shepherds would not keep flocks in FIELDS on a COLD and RAINY December night”
- D. There are ANSWERS to the challenges
1. Coincidence with pagan holidays is IRRELEVANT
 - a. Passover consistent with pagan “Rite of SPRING”
 - b. Church day of WORSHIP is named for a PAGAN GOD
 - c. Coincidence was often INTENTIONAL to signify Christianity’s CONQUEST of the pagan symbol
 - d. There is no modern correlation between CHRISTMAS and ANY pagan holiday
 2. The matter of the SHEPHERDS is conjectural and inconclusive

III. Conclusions

- A. There is no Biblical COMMAND either for or against commemoration of Christ’s BIRTH
- B. There is historical precedent for Jews and Christians ESTABLISHING HOLIDAYS to commemorate significant ACTS OF GOD
- C. There are centuries of Christian TRADITION for celebrating Christ’s birth
- D. There is no valid reason for REJECTING December 25 in favor of any OTHER DATE
- E. Therefore, it cannot be said to be WRONG to celebrate Christmas (cf. Rom. 14:5-6)
- F. We must be certain we celebrate unto the LORD (Zech. 7:4-10)