



Let me point out a parallel in the Bible. In Phil. 1:15-18, Paul wrote, "Some, to be sure are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will....the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed: and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice."

The point, as I see it, is this: If Paul could rejoice when Christ was preached by those of impure motives, then surely I can rejoice when people focus on the birth of my Lord, even though their motivation for doing so may be rooted in ignorance or acceptance of some false religious traditions. Yes, Paul exposed their false motives and errors. And I intend to point out the errors which led false religious teachers to make December 25th the day for a religious celebration of His birth. But, instead of focusing totally upon the negative, I, like Paul, choose to rejoice that the birth of our Saviour is acknowledged and advertised in a world which needs Him so badly.

### **The Origin of Christmas**

Several years ago, Mr. Louis Cassels, a religious writer for UPI, made the following remarks on the origin of Christmas:

*"Date of Festival - At that time [the 3rd Century], December 25th was a pagan holiday widely observed in the Roman Empire as the festival of the Sun God. It was then, as now, an occasion for gift-giving, feasting and general revelry.*

*"The church 'Christianized' the holiday by inaugurating a special observance called 'Christ's Mass' in honor of the birth of Jesus. (No one knew then, nor knows now, the actual month and day of Jesus' birth, so the church felt free to choose an arbitrary date for the celebration.)...."*

*"Tuetonic Origin - Decorating evergreens in the honor of the Christ child is a legacy from the Teutonic tribes of northern Europe, who worshipped sacred oaks before they were converted to Christianity in the 8th Century."*

According to this authoritative statement, the date of December 25th as the birthday of Jesus is purely an arbitrary decision of religious leaders. No Bible passage may be cited which pin-points the date.

Further, the Catholic Encyclopedia states: *"Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church." The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that "as late as 245 A.D. Origen repudiated the idea of keeping the birthday of Christ." Colliers Encyclopedia tells us that the celebration of Christmas "can scarcely date from the third century for the early Christians did not keep birthdays."*

This should explain why we do not enter into the religious observance of Christmas. For to do so would be to act on the forbidden basis of human tradition alone (Matthew 15:9) and invalidate our claim to speak and practice only those things for which we can find divine authority.

Having said all of this, we know of no principle of truth violated in decorating a tree, giving gifts, family dinners, sending greeting cards, and participating in other seasonal customs to which we attach no religious significance.

It is therefore in this spirit that I can wish all of our readers a truly "Merry Christmas" and a joyous holiday season.

We have posted a new sermon.

So please check it out and tell others about our website.

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[www.churchofchristbermuda.bm](http://www.churchofchristbermuda.bm)

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[info@churchofchristbermuda.bm](mailto:info@churchofchristbermuda.bm)

Have a Bermuadful Day