
CHURCH OF THE
E T E R N A L

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come." – Matthew 24:14

December 8, 2010

Dear Brethren and Friends:

Within a few weeks, this world celebrates Christmas. Paradoxically and perhaps surprisingly to many, it is not only the "Christian" world, which observes this popular festival. Many non-Christian nations observe it too—but this fact is not all that startling when we consider that Christmas is anything else but Christian. Its origins are steeped in paganism, and any objective researcher will have to admit this truth. Many don't care, though, thinking that it makes no difference whether it's pagan or Christian, as long as it's nice, fun-filled, family-oriented and, perhaps, resembling the appearance of "some" warm religious "feelings."

From a strictly human point of view, this concept might even make sense. After all, what could possibly be wrong with a family gathering; a common meal; a beautifully decorated Christmas tree; colorful lights in the front yard; nice carols; the exchange of gifts; donations to worthy causes of feeding the hungry; the smiling faces of children receiving presents; and even the rare walk or drive to a nearby Church service? One would be well-advised, of course, to overlook rampant alcoholism, brutal crimes and strife at home, and the many "nice" fabricated stories about Santa Claus or the little Christ child, which are told to innocent and believing children... but apart from these accompanying circumstances or "excusable" white lies, what could possibly be wrong with observing a most joyous Christmas season—a time of peace and good will toward man?

As it is the case with so many affairs of life, it is wrong because God tells us so. Man, by himself, does not know right from wrong. It must be revealed to him, and he must be willing to accept it and live by it. If you are in doubt as to whether or not it makes a difference to God whether His people participate in humanly-devised pagan holidays (whether or not the "Christian" element is emphasized), please read our free booklet, "Don't Keep Christmas." It proves to you that Jesus was not born on December 25; that the early Christians never kept Christmas, but that idol-worshipping pagans did; that the Roman Catholic Church adopted this festival and its customs for the sake of sun-adoring heathens in order to bring them into the "Christian" fold; and, most importantly, that and why God condemns its celebration with the strongest of terms.

Most of you know about and have accepted God's viewpoint on Christmas. But what about other areas of life? Do we sometimes feel that we don't always have to follow God's directives—at least perhaps not that carefully and precisely? Do we occasionally think that we might know a better way or an alternate course of action, which might also work and which God would accept as well?

Examples are perhaps too numerous to list here, but let's ask ourselves: Are we convinced and convicted that it is always wrong to advocate or even go to war; to vote in government elections; to participate in jury duty; to support or have an abortion; to cheat on our mate; to commit premarital fornication; to lie or stretch the truth a little; to take God's name in vain; to use foul language; to smoke or get drunk; to hurt or offend our fellow man; to refuse to do good when it is in our power to do so, or to be truly peacemakers??? Many or perhaps even most Christians would agree that "all of the above" is wrong, but how often do we fall short, thinking perhaps at that tempting moment that it does not really matter "that much" to God.

However, all of it—and much more—matters a great deal to our Creator. We are to become perfect, as He is perfect (Matthew 5:48)—and could we imagine that God would lie just a little or that He would compromise just one iota of His law? Christ said in Matthew 5:18 that not one of the smallest letters nor one tittle will pass from the law until all is fulfilled or accomplished—until everyone will have been given the opportunity to accept and keep it. After all, the law of God describes the very immutable and unchangeable character of God.

When we become too indifferent to God's Word, we will have to learn the hard way. God chastens everyone whom He receives (Hebrews 12:6). Sometimes, God does it directly, by bringing about circumstances which should teach us and wake us up. When things just don't go right for a prolonged period of time, we should ask ourselves what God might be telling us. Sometimes, however, penalties come automatically, because sins have built-in consequences. Blessings are the effect of obedience, while disobedience (sin) results in automatic curses (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). God wants us to become Christians who are astute enough to recognize why certain events may be happening in our lives. He tells us in Proverbs 15:31: "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise" (Authorized Version). This is not just talking about reproof from friends which, if heeded, prolongs our lives, but it is mainly addressing life's reproofs or corrections. We are to listen and consider those, and learn from them, if we want to become wise and succeed.

God has told us, individually and collectively, what He expects of us today. He wants His gospel OF the Kingdom of God to be proclaimed in all the world as a witness (Matthew 24:14); He wants His Church to prepare for Christ's Second Coming (Revelation 19:7); He wants all of us to watch world conditions and ourselves, and to pray always (Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36); and He wants us to always abound in the Work of God (Mark 13:34; John 14:12; 1 Corinthians 15:58)—not delaying, but hastening the day of Christ's return (2 Peter 3:9, 12). He wants us to live in peace with each other (Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:13); to encourage each other; not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:24-25)—in short, to replace all carnal selfishness with outgoing concern for others.

It's just another way of saying: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37, 39). But again, God must show us HOW to love—because man does not know that kind of godly love which is required of him. To God, it's not a small thing. As our truest friend, He is never indifferent about loving us at all times (Proverbs 17:17). God IS love (1 John 4:8), and He wants us to BECOME love as well. We are not talking about that warm, cozy, fleeting feeling of "love," which is popularized and "embraced" at Christmas time, but we are accepting God's Word, which tells us: "For this IS the love of God, that we keep His commandments (1 John 5:3)."

In these dark days—especially quite literally during winter time in the Western hemisphere—let us shine brightly (Proverbs 4:18), by reflecting God's light to the people in this world. Rather than being temporary, passing candles on pagan Christmas trees, let us be enduring, ever-burning and never extinguishing representations of God's loving character, so that people can recognize and even glorify God in us (Matthew 5:16). That is what God wants—that is what He expects of us. That is why we are called today. Let us always walk worthy of our calling (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

With brotherly love,



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