

Holidays

holiday: A consecrated day, a religious festival. Now usually written Holy-day.

- I. The keeping of religious holidays is virtually universal among the religions of this world.
 - A. Certain calendar days are deemed sacred or exalted above others and are deemed vital aspects of the belief system. The deity is honored by their observance and dishonored by their omission.
 - B. In pagan religions that took their cues from nature rather than from Scripture, the holy-days generally were keyed to the sun's moments (vernal and autumnal equinoxes, summer and winter solstices), or to the perceived motions/patterns of the stars and moon.
DEU 4:19.

- II. Under the O.T. law, God had ordained certain holy-days such as sabbaths, jubilees and feast days when Israel was to appear before the LORD. **LEV 23:24; 25:10; DEU 16:16.**
 - A. The O.T. system was to endure only until the coming of the Messiah.
GAL 3:19-25 c/w HEB 9:9-10.
 - B. The O.T. was set aside in favor of a superior covenant established by the Lord Jesus Christ.
COL 2:14-17.
 1. The N.T. admits of no holydays to be observed by Christians.
 2. One of the tricks of Satan is to bring N.T. believers into bondage through holyday observances which are *weak and beggarly elements*. **GAL 4:9-10.**

- III. Man-made traditions and rituals are favorite tools of carnal man to carve out his own model of righteousness.
 - A. The scribes and Pharisees were noted for voiding God's law to keep their own traditions (**MAR 7:1-13**). Their tradition was more precious to them than God's revelation.
 - B. God wants obedience to His word more than man's tradition or ceremony.
JER 7:22-23, 30; 1SAM 15:22.

- IV. God has specific requirements for His worship and deviations are unacceptable. **JOH 4:23-24.**
 - A. The first recorded sin after the fall was a worship sin. **GEN 4:3-8.**
 1. Abel's worship was by faith (**HEB 11:4**), according to God's word. **ROM 10:17.**
 2. Cain's unscriptural tradition-oriented worship was evil. **1JO 3:12.**
 - B. The closing chapters of history are a conflict between true worship and false worship.
REV 13:15; 20:4.
 - C. God will be approached on His terms only. **LEV 10:1-3; MAT 28:19-20.**
 - D. Corrupting the appointed purpose of God's ordinance invites judgment.
1CO 11:1-2, 29-30.
 - E. Departure from God's revelation devolves to creature-worship, not Creator-worship (**ROM 1:25**) and such is service to devils. **1CO 10:20.**

- V. God particularly forbids the admixture of pagan customs with His service.
DEU 12:29-32; JER 10:1-4; MAT 6:7-8; 2CO 6:14-18.
 - A. Here are some examples of mixing pagan customs with the religion of God:
 1. **2KI 17:28-33.** Pagans blending the fear of God with service to devils.
 2. **JER 7:2, 8-10, 30.** Jews doing the same as the pagans.
 3. **EZE 8:13-16.** Jews adopting the Babylonian/Sumerian/Syrian mysteries.

4. **JER 7:17-18; 44:15-19.** Jews incorporating the pagan concept of a “queen of heaven.”
- B. Professing Christians today have commonly adopted pagan customs on the premise that they are not using them to worship pagan gods but the true God.
 1. For example, the birth of Jesus Christ is supposedly being honored by the setting up and decorating of a tree, a custom of heathen worship of their idol. **JER 10:1-4.**
 2. The consecration of elements of idolatry unto the true God is still idolatry (**EXO 32:5-6 c/w 1CO 10:5-7**) and arguments to use a green tree to honor God would also justify the use of a golden calf.
 3. Idolatry is something to abominate and flee, not incorporate. **DEU 7:25-26; 1CO 10:14.**
 4. True repentance is turning to God *from* idols, NOT *with* them (**1TH 1:9**), NOR with their customs.
 5. The importing of heathen elements into Biblical religion makes as much sense as domesticating a cobra for the childrens’ enjoyment.
- C. Some try to justify this unholy mixture by saying that Christ conquered Satan by His resurrection and that *an idol is nothing* (per **1CO 8:4**) so it is acceptable to honor Christ’s victory by using conquered idolatry’s elements to glorify God.
 1. But idols have always been “nothings” to be abominated, not assimilated. **ISA 44:10; JER 10:5.**
 2. The “conquered” idol’s worship customs were commonly lewd and naked (c/w **EXO 32:25**). Should that be consecrated for Christian use?

- VI. An examination of modern Christian holidays easily reveals that they are nothing more than superstitious pagan customs which have been altered and given a Christian twist. For example:
- A. *Christmas* is nothing more than a repurposing of the old Feast of Sol, Saturnalia, Nativity of the Sun, or Mithraism which were all celebrated at the winter solstice, as any decent encyclopedia (even the Catholic Encyclopedia) declares.
 1. These pagan holidays generally commemorated the cycle of the death and rebirth of their god (the sun) at the winter solstice (in the northern hemisphere).
 2. The Catholic church, in order to pacify the heathen and encourage them to embrace Christianity simply consecrated their high days and customs unto the Lord, following in the footsteps of Aaron. **EXO 32:5-6.**
 3. “The well-known solar feast of Natalis Invicti – the Nativity of the Unconquered Sun, celebrated on 25 December has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date.” (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 714, art. *Christmas*)
 4. “Water, oil, light, incense, singing, procession, prostration, decoration of altars, vestments of priests, are naturally at the service of universal religious instinct...Even pagan feasts may be ‘baptized’: certainly our processions of 25 April are the Robigalia; the Rogation days may replace the Ambarualia; the date of Christmas Day may be due to the same instinct which placed on 25 December the Natalis Invicti of the solar cult.” (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 11, p. 90, art. *Paganism*)
 5. “The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence...The pagan festival with its riot and merrymaking was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and manner.” (New Schaff-Herzog Ency. of Religious Knowledge, art. *Christmas*)

6. Many Christians today think well of unbelieving Jews who celebrate Hanukkah to commemorate the *cleansing* of their ancient temple from the heathen pollutions brought into it by Antiochus Epiphanes (circa 167 B.C.) while simultaneously *polluting* their own temples (churches) with heathen elements in professed adoration of Christ.
- B. The same thing was done with *Easter*, which was the old pagan festival of the goddess of fertility, the *queen of heaven*. She was, depending on the culture, known as Astarte, Ishtar, Eostre or Diana, etc. And just what do colored eggs and rabbits have to do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ?
 1. “Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table of Easter Day, colored red to symbolize the Easter joy...The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs celebrating the return of spring, gravitated to Easter.” (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 5, p. 227, art. *Easter*)
 2. “The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility.” (Encyclopedia Britannica, art. *Easter*)
 3. “...writers in the fourth century were prone to describe many practices (e.g. the Lenten fast of forty days) as of Apostolic institution which certainly had no claim to be so regarded.” (Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, p. 484, art. *Celibacy*)
 - C. Likewise, *Halloween*, the old Druidic festival honoring Saman, lord of the dead, was “conquered” by Catholic Christianity and adapted to gain the allegiance of the pagan Celts & Picts.
 1. “Halloween: The eve of All Hallows or All Saints, the last night of October. In the Old Celtic calendar, the year began on 1st November, so that the last evening of October was 'old-year's night', the night of all the witches, which the Church transformed into the Eve of All Saints.” (Oxford English Dictionary)
 2. “In the 7th century CE Pope Boniface IV established All Saints’ Day, originally on May 13, and in the following century, perhaps in an effort to supplant the pagan holiday with a Christian observance, it was moved to November 1. The evening before All Saints’ Day became a holy, or hallowed, eve and thus Halloween.” (Encyclopedia Britannica Online, art. *Halloween*)
 - D. So obvious is this faulty consecration of pagan religion that modern-day pagans and witches decry the Christian hi-jacking of their religious high days and customs.
 - E. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? “Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God...” (**DEU 12:31**).
 - F. Pagan religious customs are ritual pictures of their gods and their ideals and demands.
 1. Christians are married to God in Christ. **2CO 11:2**.
 2. Using pagan customs in service to God is akin to a wife loving her husband with pictures of her old flames.
 3. **(1CO 10:22)** Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?
 - G. True conversion is “...forgetting those things which are behind...” (**PHIL 3:13**), not continuing them as unto the Lord; it is to “...put off the old man with his deeds; And...put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him” (**COL 3:9-10**), not after the image of a green tree, egg, rabbit, etc.

VII. Here are some additional considerations regarding holidays:

- A. Bible Christians celebrate Christ's birth, death, and resurrection by joyfully receiving the gospel by faith, repentance and baptism, by praising God, and observing the Lord's Supper.
 1. This is celebrating Christ's coming according to God's appointed manner.

2. This is not a celebration with pagan traditions, but it is a celebration.
 3. However, people crave a celebration that caters to their carnal appetites.
- B. Christians are responsible for the constructions that others place upon their actions. **1CO 10:27-30.**
1. The world in general views Christmas as a religious celebration of Christ's birth and Easter as a religious celebration of His resurrection.
 2. Christians must avoid being identified with these celebrations lest they embolden others in their wrongdoings. **1CO 8:10.**
 3. Christians must avoid a celebration that makes light of Satanism (Halloween).
- C. Avoid the extreme of thinking that all traditions are evil.
1. Scripture allows feasts, birthdays, and exchanging gifts. **1CO 10:27; JOH 2:1-2; 10:22-23; JOB 1:4 c/w 3:1-3; EST 9:22.**
 2. Use of such acceptable customs can soothe the emotions of those who do not share your convictions about purity of religious worship.
 3. It is the religious tradition of which one must beware. Having an annual church picnic is not a religious tradition: it is a gathering for a good time, not a holy time.
 4. If a person, family, community, etc., appointed a particular day/time for a seasonal festival without holy-day notions, this would be fine.
- D. Liberty to *esteem one day above another* (**ROM 14:5**) must be regulated by precept.
1. Is it an occasion for the flesh, an excuse for a carnal celebration in God's name? **GAL 5:13; 1CO 11:20-22.**
 2. Does it have the appearance of evil? **1TH 5:22.**
 3. Is it a man-made tradition that substitutes for or voids a law of God? **MAR 7:13.**
 4. Is it *will-worship* (**COL 2:23**) that is so much “strange fire” (**LEV 10:1-2**)?
- E. The objections of family and friends must be borne for Christ's sake. **MAT 10:34-38.**
- F. What about Thanksgiving Day? Thanksgiving Day is a civic celebration appointed by *policy*, not prophecy (as is Independence Day or Memorial Day, etc.). Christ made an appearance at one such celebration in **JOH 10:22-23.**

VIII. Here are recommendations for dealing with friends, family, acquaintances, etc.

- A. Affirm your brotherly love to them but, as in all life, there are boundaries to your conduct.
- B. Make sure that you are yourself convinced of the necessity of pure, scriptural worship. You will impress nobody with weakness or hypocrisy. **GAL 2:11-16; ROM 2:21-22.**
- C. Care not if the whole world goes after error. Stand on principle. **REV 13:3; ROM 12:2.**
- D. Be steadfast, as Ruth. The power of principled personal conviction is great. **RUTH 1:11-18; 1CO 15:58.**
- E. Let not your knowledge of Christian liberty hinder others. **1CO 8:1, 9-10.**
- F. Be prayerful, prepared and proper. **COL 4:2-6.**
- G. Be patient and recognize that human nature is challenged to move away from its comfort zones of familiarity. **LUK 5:39.**
- H. Recognize that not everyone governs their thoughts by Scripture. You may have to “fallow the ground” with reason in order that seed of the Word falls in and takes root. **ACT 17:22-31.**
- I. Keep in mind that if the Spirit indwells someone, they have an “inside voice and law” that is affected by spiritual truth. **ACT 2:37 ct/w ROM 8:7.**
- J. Be accommodating where you can without violating Biblical principle. **1CO 9:19-23.**
- K. Be prepared, willing and do good since this cannot reasonably be gainsayed. **GAL 6:10; ACT 4:13-14; 1PE 2:12-15.**