

A photograph of a religious procession, likely during a festival or holiday. Several figures are visible, dressed in traditional, ornate costumes. The central figure is seated and appears to be a deity or a person of high status, surrounded by attendants. The scene is set outdoors, possibly in a temple courtyard or a public square. The text "Holidays or Holy Days?" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Holidays or Holy Days?

Holidays or Holy Days?

- Did God ordain certain days as sacred from others, requiring that faithful Christians engage in special observances of those days?
- Can Christians engage in celebration on those days without having fellowship with error?

What Is Written?

- Jewish observance of religious feast and fast days ended with the beginning of the dominion of Christ.
 - Col. 2:14-17 - “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. 16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.”
 - Gal. 4:10-11 - “You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.”

What Is Written?

- God is indifferent toward a Christian's observance or non-observance of a day
 - Rom. 14:4-6 - "Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks."

What Is Written?

- Sundays are the only day where Christians must have a special observance
 - Acts 20:7 - “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.”
 - 1Cor. 16:2 - “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”
- God’s word is silent regarding Christmas, Easter, or any other day that has been elevated to the status of doctrine by humankind.

What Is Written?

- Are you aware that:
 - Christians in the NT did not celebrate the birth of Jesus as an annual observance?
 - Most Protestant churches did not begin celebrating Christmas until the 19th century?
 - Most churches of Christ still do not have annual observances of Christ's birth?

Where Did The Observance Of Christmas Come From?

- Christianity Through The Centuries, p. 160
- Catholic Encyclopedia, v. III, p. 246
- Externals of the Catholic Church, p. 140
- Zondervan Bible Dictionary, p. 163

Where Did The Observance Of Christmas Come From?

- When was Jesus born?
 - “The New Testament provides no clues in this regard” (Encyclopedia Britannica).
 - The NT simply states that it happened in the days of Caesar Augustus and while Quirinius was governing Syria - Luke 2:1-2
 - Most scholars place the year of Jesus' birth between 4-6 B.C. The actual year is uncertain, let alone the month and day

Where Did The Observance Of Christmas Come From?

- The earliest reference to Christmas is in a calendar in 354 A.D
- Among Protestant churches, they condemned Christmas as “trappings of popery”
- Puritans of New England outlawed in 1659
- Christmas was declared a U.S. federal holiday in 1870

Should Christmas Be Observed By Christians?

- Apostle Paul was not averse to observing certain feast days apart from the church and its work
 - He kept Jewish customs when expedient - 1Cor. 9:19-20
 - He had Timothy circumcised - Acts 16:1-3
 - He took a vow - Acts 18:18
 - He kept a Jewish feast in Jerusalem - Acts 18:19-21
 - He participated in purification ceremonies, which included sacrifices - Acts 21:17-26

Should Christmas Be Observed By Christians?

- However, his teaching made clear:
 - It should be kept on an individual basis - Rom. 14:5-6
 - It should not be bound on others - Gal. 2:3-5
 - It had nothing to do with our justification in Christ - Gal. 5:4-6
 - It should never mislead others or harm our influence - 1Cor. 8:7-13

Should Christmas Be Observed By Christians?

- Jesus warned of the danger of human traditions...
 - He rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their traditions - Mark 7:1-13
 - They bound their traditions on others
 - In keeping their traditions, they laid aside the commands of God

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

- Annual celebration of the DBR of Christ did not first appear until the second century AD; officially accepted at the council of Nicea in 325 AD.
- An uninspired human development, an addition to the Word - Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 1:8-9
- We commemorate Christ's DBR every Sunday - Acts 20:6-7; 1Cor. 11:17-34

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

- Ancient pagan celebration of the vernal equinox, observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox
- Ancient origins: Babylon - Ishtar; Assyria - Ostern; Canaan - Ashtarte; Philistia - Ashtaroth; Celts - Eastre. A “Christian” holiday named after the wife of Baal!
- Popular celebration of the annual dedication to Eastre, Saxon goddess of spring fertility, representative of sensuousness and sensuality. Anticipation of good crops, thanking her for the coming of the growing season; worship with fertility rites, fornication in open fields around a bonfire or Maypole, and exchanging of gifts of symbols of fertility: eggs, rabbits and garlands of flowers

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

- Are you aware:
 - That the church in the NT did not hold a yearly observance of the Lord's resurrection?
 - The word "Easter" is found only once in the KJV Bible, and it is a mistranslation? - Acts 12:4. The word in the original is actually Passover
 - That the word "Easter" actually comes from "Eastre" the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility?
 - That many of the customs of Easter have pagan origins?

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

- So when did people begin observing Easter?
 - The practice began early, in the form of a Christianized Passover. The Jews tried to keep their customs as Christians and equated the Passover with the DBR of Jesus
 - Assimilation of pagan ritual into "Christian" observances was common when the Catholic missionaries went into a pagan area

Should Christians Celebrate Easter?

- What must Christians understand? The same principles apply with Easter as with Christmas:
 - The Bible is silent regarding any yearly observance of the resurrection; God instructed us to remember it weekly. The law of exclusion eliminates permissive authority in the presence of specific authority
 - Any observance of Easter is based on the tradition of men and not the word of God, as is therefore dangerous
 - While individuals have more liberty than the church does collectively, the church has no authority to engage in it at all
 - Christians who do, risk misleading the weak and uninformed, and damage their own influence for the Lord.

Holidays or Holy Days?

- I am going to remember and rejoice in the resurrection of the Lord every day.
- His resurrection has changed my life and keeps me looking forward to my own resurrection
 - 2Cor 13:4 - “For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.”

Holidays or Holy Days?

- 1Cor. 15:20-22 - “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.”