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# BIBLE TALK

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This week the question is: **Should churches cancel their services on Christmas Day?**

This year (2016) Christmas will fall on a Sunday. Keep that in mind as I tell you the following story.

Throughout December it is common to hear people complaining that Christ is being taken out of Christmas. A while back people were upset because a Lowe's Home Improvement Center had put up a banner which read, "*Holiday Trees On Sale.*" In other words, people were upset because the Christmas tree wasn't being called a "**Christmas** tree" anymore. The politically correct thing to do is to not mention *Christmas* any more. As people check out at cash registers, they are no longer told, "Merry Christmas." Instead, they are told, "Happy holidays." The politically correct crowd wants to include **Jews and their celebration of Hanukah**. They want to include **Muslims and their celebration of Ramadan**. The politically correct, postmodern crowd wants to become everything to everyone. The word "Christmas" has to go because that favors the Christian religion only. So people get upset that Christmas is gradually being taken away and some are saying, "We need to put Christ back into Christmas."

Now ... here's something interesting that happened. The First Baptist Church in Atlanta, pastored by Charles Stanley, cancelled their regular Sunday morning services on December 25, 2005 ... because that's Christmas day and Charles Stanley told his people that his staff needs to have a break and spend Christmas morning with their families and "that's what Christmas is really all about anyway."

Now ... that helped me understand things a little better. Christmas, to denominations, is not really about Christ at all ... is it? Christmas is really about being with family according to Charles Stanley – the senior pastor of the Atlanta First Baptist Church.

My friend, this is one reason why non-Christian people have a dim view of the *Christian religion*. Christmas, according to the denominations, is suppose to be the day Christ was born and this is when denominations are telling people they should remember Christ. And ... lo and behold ... the largest denomination in Atlanta cancels its services on Sunday morning, December 25 because the staff members need a break and need to spend time with their families.

My friend, this is unscriptural – if the scriptures matter to anyone – and they should matter. Denominations are paying only lip-service to the Bible. They claim to believe the Bible and then turn around and trample the Bible under their feet.

Listen to me carefully: **There is not one Bible passage telling the church to celebrate the birth day of Christ.** Everything done in the church must be authorized by the NT scriptures according to Col 3:17.

- The NT scriptures never authorize the church to have a special celebration for the birth of Christ.
- The scriptures never authorize the church to set up a Christmas tree.
- The scriptures never authorize the church to have some sort of special communion service on Christmas Eve or to have special musical presentations.

There is no scripture for the church to be doing any of these things which so many churches take for granted as being authorized.

The scriptures do teach the church is supposed to meet on the first day of every week to eat the Lord's supper in remembrance of the Lord's death on the cross.

### **Acts 20:7**

<sup>7</sup> 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.

The Lord's church met on the first day of the week every week to commune because this was the day the Lord resurrected (Mk 16:9).

The first day of the week, which is Sunday, is the day the church of Christ is supposed to meet and honor the Lord. Sunday is the true "birthday" of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you want to call it that, because this was the day the Lord was born from the grave which He had been placed in three days before. Notice the scripture:

### **Acts 13:33**

<sup>33</sup> **God has ... raised up Jesus.** As it is also written in the second Psalm: 'You are My Son, **Today I have begotten You.**'

Notice, when Ps 2 says, "Today I have begotten You," this refers to God raising Jesus up from the dead. The day which the Lord was "born," then, is the first day of the week – when He came forth from the grave. The scriptures instruct the church to meet on this day every week – even

on those occasions when the first day of the week falls on December 25 and the church is supposed to have communion to remember the Lord's death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead.

### **Hebrews 10:25**

<sup>25</sup> not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

This passage is teaching that it is wrong to forsake the assembly on the first day of the week (Sundays). It is wrong to dismiss services on December 25 just so staff members can stay home with their families.

We should all be thankful for the Lord's birth, but we do not honor the Lord by canceling the services of the church and taking vacation from worshipping Him. No matter what the holiday, the church is required to assemble on the first day of every week and break the bread in memory of the Lord's death (Acts 20:7).

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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