

THE COMING HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is upon us. Next week begins our sometimes hectic schedules due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. In many cases we find gatherings and events associated with these holidays that conflict with the gathering of the saints for Bible studies and worship services. One word of warning should suffice. The inspired scriptures do not say in Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together except during the holiday season". The holiday season does not supersede obedience and faithfulness to God! Let us all be sure we do not set God aside for holiday gatherings.

Concerning the holiday "Thanksgiving", we usually realize that this is not a Christian holiday, but a national holiday. In order for it to be a Christian holiday, we would have to find authorization for it in the New Testament. We certainly do find authorization in the New Testament to be thankful to God, but we do not find the setting aside one special day each year for such to take place. In fact, we find no annual Christian holidays found in the Bible. In Judaism, there was a holy day known as "Passover". And, there was authorization in the law of Moses for that holy day. Such would be required in the New Testament for a specific day of the year to be a Christian holy day or holiday.

When it comes to Christmas, the majority of those around us who claim Christianity as their religion, view Christmas as a "Christian holiday". We are bombarded with things like "Jesus is the reason for the season" and such. One was asked if they could find "Christmas" in the New Testament and answered, "sure" and then went about showing the text in the gospels concerning the birth of Christ. Those texts certainly authorize belief in the birth of Christ, but they surely do not authorize selecting a specific day of the year to celebrate the birth of Christ, calling it a "Christian holiday". Remember, if it is a "Christian holy day", there must be authorization for it found in the pages of the New Testament. The truth is, those who would celebrate Christmas as a Christian holiday have ceased to be Christians in doing so, for to do so is not to follow the teachings of Jesus, but the teaching of mere men. There is a special day that is authorized in the New Testament, however, it is not one day per year, but one day per week. And, it is not to celebrate the Lord's birth, but His death. It is done on the first day of each week when the saints gather to worship God.

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THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR THINKING

Many times I have heard said when someone said that they thought something, only to find out they were wrong, "that's what you get for thinking". Though this is usually said jokingly and though it is incumbent upon us to use our intellect when it comes to things secular as well as things spiritual, this points toward a common mistake on the part of man concerning their salvation. Many sermons have been preached on those words of Naaman, "Behold, I thought..." (II Kings 5:11). When it comes to things spiritual, it is what God has said, rather than what we think that is important.

The prophet Isaiah said, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9). The wise man, Solomon, said, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). As the apostle Paul made his defense before King Agrippa, he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them" (Acts 26:9-10). Before the chief priests and all their council, Paul said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day" (Acts 23:1). Paul thought he was doing the right thing when he persecuted Christians, but he was wrong! When the Lord met him on the road to Damascus, He asked Paul, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4). When Ananias was sent to him by the Lord, he said to Paul, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). When Paul stopped doing what "he thought" and started doing what the Lord said, then and only then could Paul be forgiven from his sins.

There is a real epidemic of the "I think" disease that has spread across this great land. Some think that salvation is by faith only. Some think that one church is as good as another. Some think that once they are saved, they can never be lost. Even some saints think they can forsake the assembly of the saints and still be pleasing to God. Friends and brethren, follow what God said, not what you think! *Robert*