

Seven Lies about Christmas

Mark 7:9-13

Introduction: It is important to know your Bible over the traditions of men. Traditions make God's Word ineffective in our lives and we are unable to experience it's power. This is especially true concerning the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

1. Three wise men came to Jesus when He was a baby and gave Him gifts.
 - a. Matthew 2:1-2, 7, 16
 - b. The passage never gives the number of wise men.
 - c. Why is this important? Because too many believe tradition over the Bible, including preachers.
2. There never was a "Santa Claus"
 - a. Saint Nicholas was a fourth century church Bishop who was also a very kind man and had a reputation for helping the poor and giving secret gifts to people who needed it.
 - b. Later tradition came up with fantasies about the man that went far and away from the truth.
 - c. Why is this important? Because Satan was able to take a Christian servant's ministry, re-work it into magical fantasies that took the focus from Christ.
3. Jesus was born on December 25
 - a. The early Christian church did not celebrate Jesus' birth. It wasn't until A.D. 440 that the church officially proclaimed December 25 as the birth of Christ. This was not based on any religious evidence but on a pagan feast. Saturnalia was a tradition inherited by the Roman pagans from an earlier Babylonian priesthood. December 25 was used as a celebration of the birthday of the sun god. It was observed near the winter solstice.
 - b. Why is this important: because the Bible's focus is not on when Jesus was born but what He came to the earth to do.
 - c. John 3:16-17; Matt. 1:21

4. We should not celebrate Christmas because it is actually a pagan holiday

- a. The other extreme is to reject Christmas celebrations completely as some pseudo-Christian cults do such as the Jehovah Witnesses.
- b. A pagan holiday is the best time to put your Savior at the forefront of life as long as it is He that we are recognizing and not our traditions.

5. Christmas is all about exchanging gifts

- a. While we do not believe historically that Jesus was born on December 25 we should, as stated in the fourth lie, recognize the real reason for this season.
- b. There is nothing wrong with exchanging gifts but people go out and get themselves in debt when Romans 13 tells us not to owe any man anything.
- c. Do not allow for the pressure and stress of gift-giving get you in debt, depressed, and failing to remember that if Christmas is to be celebrated then we should remember who we are celebrating.

6. The Christmas tree is pagan so we should not have one.

- a. There is some truth to the fact that pagans worshipped evergreen plants that stayed green all year long, but that is not necessarily true concerning how Christians began using Christmas trees.
- b. Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. Some built Christmas pyramids of wood and decorated them with evergreens and candles if wood was scarce. It is a widely held belief that Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. Walking toward his home one winter evening, composing a sermon, he was awed by the brilliance of stars twinkling amidst evergreens. To recapture the scene for his family, he erected a tree in the main room and wired its branches with lighted candles.

7. The pastor must preach a Christmas or any holiday related sermon around this time every year.

- a. **WRONG!** The pastor is not obligated to preach a Christmas sermon just because it is Christmas. The pastor's Master is Jesus Christ and not His congregation.

- b. The pastor is there to serve the congregation but only as Jesus Christ directs him or her and not the people.
- c. The pastor must seek the Lord for his messages and not what people want to hear. If the Lord directs the pastor to preach something totally foreign to the holiday that Sunday falls on then the past must preach that and not the message the people thinks he should preach.