

4th & Stewart church of Christ

"...upon this rock I will build my church;
and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
~ Matthew 16:18



December 16, 2012

Contact Us:

3201 4th Street
Brownwood, TX 76801
325-646-7102
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office@4thstreetcoc.org

Meeting Times:

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:45 AM
Worship..... 10:40 AM
Care, Inc. Service..... 2:30 PM
Worship..... 6:00 PM

Tuesday:

Redstone Class..... 9:30 AM

Wednesday:

Ladies Bible Class On Break
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Elders:

Gene Bannister..... Billy Chism

Deacons:

Mike Bannister..... Jim Moore

Don Smith..... James Thomas

Preacher:

Ryan Smithey.....

Works We Support:

Cherokee Home for Children
Gospel Broadcast Network
Heart of Texas Bible Camp (Bangs)
House to House, Heart to Heart
Mission Printing
Rohan Jones, Africa
The Truth in Love
World Bible School

Let us know if you want to study
the Bible to know more about
Christ and His Church.

The Heart Searcher

Dan Flournoy

*"Search me O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"*
(Psalms 139:23-24)

This psalm has been called "the crown of all the psalms" because it so dramatically describes the nature of God. Jehovah is described as an all knowing, all powerful, and ever present deity.

In these verses, David prays for God to search his heart and to lead him in the way of everlasting life. This ought to be our prayer as well. The apostle Paul admonishes:

"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5). Self-examination is a valuable exercise, yet it is sometimes misleading. Sometimes our estimation of ourselves is faulty. There are many good people who feel bad about themselves, and many bad people who feel good about themselves. Paul wrote of himself saying, "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judges me is the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:4)." Thus, our self-examination must be done in light of what God has said in His word.

Concerning the word of God, consider Heb 4:12 "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." As we allow the word of God to penetrate our hearts, to dwell richly within, it has a way of shedding light upon our character (Colossians 3:16).

God's word is able to show us where we need to make change: "And see if there is any wicked way in me..." However, there are those who refuse to submit to the "searching" word of God. As Jesus said "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." (John 3:19-20).

The object of this search is not to give God information, but to give us information about our selves. As the Word searches our heart through daily study and application, we learn to "Abhor what is evil...love the brethren...be fervent in spirit...rejoice in hope...be patient in tribulation...continue to pray...repay no one evil for evil...live peaceably with all men..." (Romans 12:9-18).

If we, like David, will submit to the search we can change our lives and we will be led in the way everlasting.

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*Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*

Psalm 90:2

I appreciate Allen's invitation Wednesday night concerning man's false ideas about faith, baptism, and salvation offered by God. It is a great reminder that there is much error being taught in the world and followed because men follow what they think and like rather than what God has said. May we always stand upon that which God has revealed as our standard (Col. 3:17). Along those lines I include the following article that hopefully will be helpful both to you and those you can help teach. Also included this week is an insert containing a good article and reminder sent out by Tom Moore this past week concerning the observance of Christmas. Just as the world thinks it is strange we do not follow in their sin (1 Peter 4:4), many also will think it strange we do not observe this time as having special religious significance. I will conclude with another gem I found this week as something to think about...

“If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.”

Augustine of Hippo

The subject of water baptism is such a contentious subject in the religious world. Contrary to popular belief, Paul had this baptism in mind in Ephesians 4:5 as a foundational pillar of our Christian faith. Nevertheless, the Biblical subject is so fundamental to a New Testament Christian, it is as simple as **A-B-C**.

Water baptism is the means of **APPROPRIATING** the grace of God. While it is completely true that the grace of God is the source of our salvation (Eph. 2:8), such salvation is conditional upon the obedience of our faith. Included in such are the clear words of our Lord and Savior just prior to His ascension: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned”* (Mark 16:16). While these words were still ringing in the ears of His apostles and the thought still fresh in their minds, it is no wonder that Peter declared to the Jews on Pentecost, *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (Acts 2:38), to which about three thousand souls complied (Acts 2:41). Therefore, salvation is equal with one gaining remission of sins, which makes the message of Jesus and His apostle, Peter, to be consistent. Again, contrary to the denominational word, the preposition “for” preceding

ABC's of Water Baptism

Sam Willcut

the statement *“the remission of sins”* does not mean *“because of,”* but it rather means *“in order to receive; unto, into,”* to which many Greek theologians agree. Since the blood of Jesus is the instrument of cleansing (Matt. 26:28; Rev. 1:5), no one in any right mind would allude to the element of water cleansing the soul, but knowledgeable Bible students understand that water baptism places one in the blood of Christ; hence, Ananias told Saul, *“And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). To clarify even further, Peter explains that the element of water in baptism is not for physical cleansing but for spiritual cleansing: *Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* [1 Pet. 3:20-21]

God proclaims consistently throughout the New Testament that water baptism is the means of one entering the kingdom of God (John 3:5 – *“born of water”*) and ap-

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| Television | God's Plan for Redeeming Man | Bible Study Schedule |
|--|--|---|
| <p>The Truth In Love (Robert Dodson) Sunday @ 7:00 am on KTAB</p> <p>In Search of the Lord's Way Sunday @ 7:30 am on KTAB</p> <p>Gospel Broadcasting Network Online: 24/7 @ gbntv.org and on Roku TV: Sunday @ 6:30 am on Dish: 267, DirectTV: 376</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Radio</p> <p>Preaching the Word (Michael Light) Sunday @ 9:00am on KOXE 101.3</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Hear Learn the saving message of Christ's sacrifice (1 Cor. 1:18; Rom. 10:17).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Believe Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Confess Jesus as your Lord, Lawgiver, and King (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Repent of your sinful conduct (Luke 13:3,5)</p> <p>Complete your initial obedience to the gospel by being baptized for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Live faithfully (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:7-8)</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Week 51 1 Kings 10-15 & Acts 12-13</p> <p>Study sheets are available at the back of the auditorium.</p> <p>Also anyone interested can join us at 5 PM each Sunday in the fellowship hall to discuss the questions and answers.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“...desire the sincere milk of the work, that ye may grow thereby;”</i> (1 Pet. 2:2)</p> |



(Continued from page 2)

propriating the saving grace and mercy of God (Eph. 5:25-27 – “washing of water”; Titus 3:4-7 – “washing of regeneration”).

Water baptism is a **BURIAL**. Multiple passages are conclusive to this fact, supporting immersion (as opposed to sprinkling or pouring) as the proper method of water baptism. Paul says to the Christians in Rome, “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), and also told the Colossians, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Col. 2:12). In addition, God offers written, inspired illustrations of such in Acts 8:36-39 (“and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water”) and John 3:23 (the baptism of John in the Jordan required “much water”).

Water baptism is a **COMMAND**. One major problem with correctly understanding water baptism is that the denominational world confuses such with Holy Spirit baptism. The problem is easy to alleviate whenever one understands that Holy Spirit baptism was never a command, but a specific promise (cf. Acts 1:4-8). On the other hand, water baptism is a command for every believer in Jesus. After Peter taught Cornelius and those gathered with them, “...he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48).

Thus, with this simple outline, one can properly understand the New Testament doctrine of water baptism. If you have not been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost for the remission of your sins, why not be baptized today? If you have, would you find someone to share this message?

Visitation Meeting

Remember our visitation meeting each Sunday night following the evening worship to sign cards and discuss the work going on.

Please join us each time. Last week **24 contacts** were made. Also remember that this being the **3rd Sunday**, we will be having finger foods after the meeting...hope you can join us.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ The **Ladies class** will be on break until January 9th.
- ◆ **Dec. 31: New Year's Eve Party**, details coming soon.

Notes & Thank You Cards

- ◆ Thank you for all the thoughts, prayers, and cards sent on my mother's behalf.

In Christian Love, Mileen Kahlich and Family

- ◆ A special thanks to you for all the wonderful things you do...Thank you for the cards and prayers. I have appreciated them so much. I am doing good, just have to take it slow. Continue praying for me please, as I continue to get stronger.

Noma Fonville (Laverne Thomas' sister)

- ◆ Tell all those beloved brethren there 'THANK YOU' for the encouraging cards y'all send me from time to time. I don't always reply, but Fran & I both appreciate the kindness & thoughtfulness involved in sending them! So again, THANKS very much!

Maxie Boren

- ◆ Other cards were received by Billie Ford and Maxine Carter and are on the bulletin board in the hallway.

Celebrate

"Rejoice with those who rejoice..." (Romans 12:15)

December Birthdays: James Womack (04), Freda Cox (05), Estelle Guthrie (07), Laverne Thomas (13), Veneta Nolen (17), Kaci Churchwell (18), Priscilla Smithey (18), Linda Griffith (20), Mia Stroope (22), Joyce Hill (24).

December Anniversaries: Linda & Allen Griffith (20), Ginger & Howard King (24), Jo & Ken Maninger (25).

Mistakes? Left Out? Let Ryan know...



Records

| | Dec. 2, 2012 | Dec. 9, 2012 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bible Class | 55 | 46 |
| AM Worship | 70 | 65 |
| PM Worship | 60 | 43 |
| Wednesday PM | 45 | 45 |
| Contribution | \$1642 | \$1890 |

| | This Week: 12/16/12 | Next Week: 12/23/12 | December 2012 | |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------|
| Sunday AM: | Lead Singing: Jim Moore | Lead Singing: James Fuller | Make Announcements: Garrett Barnum | |
| Greeters | James & Cindy Fuller | Charles & Bennie White | Prepare Communion: Don & Darlene Smith | |
| Opening Prayer | James Fuller | Ken Maninger | Clean Building: Cindy Fuller | |
| Communion | Gene Bannister*, Tom Wilcox Ken Maninger, Don Smith | Joe Dennis*, John Barnum Allen Griffith, Hank Wheeler | Keep Grounds: James Fuller | |
| Closing Prayer | Garrett Barnum | Don Smith | January 2013 | |
| Attendance Cards | Seth Smithey/Caleb Dennis | Chase Churchwell/Xavier Martinez | Make Announcements: John Barnum | |
| Sunday PM: | | | Prepare Communion: Tom & Carol Wilcox | |
| Opening Prayer | James Thomas | Gene Bannister | Clean Building: The Smithey Family | |
| Scripture Reading | John Barnum <i>Philippians 1:12-18</i> | Jim Moore | Keep Grounds: Charles White | |
| Communion | Gene Bannister | Joe Dennis | | |
| Closing Prayer | Hank Wheeler | Billy Chism | | |
| Wednesday Devotionals: | December 19 Tom Wilcox | December 26 Garrett Barnum | January 2 Joe Dennis | January 9 James Fuller |

Search the Scriptures

Be like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11)

| Studies for the week of December 16, 2012 | Sunday Class <i>Philippians (Intro)</i> Wednesday Class <i>Redemption Through The Bible</i> |
|---|--|
| <p>God Is No Respector of Persons (Acts 10:34-35) <i>As we continue through the book of Acts, we come to another important conversion recorded in the early church, that of Cornelius and his household. These were ready and willing to hear what God would have them to do and were an example to others that God's blessings were indeed available to all men.</i></p> <p>1. The gospel was indeed for all.</p> <p>a. Until this time there had been a limited preaching of the gospel even though the charge had been to take it into all the world (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 8:1, 9:31, 11:19-20).</p> <p>b. Here they were instructed that even upon the uncircumcised Gentiles, the blessings of God and salvation would come (Acts 10:15, 28, 34, 46-48, 11:9, 15-18; Gen. 12:1-3; Acts 15:7-11, 16-17; 17:26-28; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:14-18, 3:3-7).</p> <p>2. But its blessings were for those who were obedient.</p> <p>a. Yes, they could be recipients of the blessings of the gospel, but like all the others, they had to obey the gospel which they were now hearing (Acts 10:6, 22, 33, 48, 11:14, 18).</p> <p>b. This was a message consistent with the whole of Bible teaching, God's blessings were there for those who would walk with Him (Deut. 30:9; I Kings 8:23, 35-36, 46-50; Matt. 7:21-23; Acts 2:40-42; 13:46; Rom. 11:22; James 1:21-22; Rev. 2:10).</p> <p><i>What a joy and a charge — the gospel is for all!</i></p> | <p>Is There Not A Cause? (Part 1) <i>David stood before his brethren, as God and His army was being mocked, and asked this searching question (1 Samuel 17:29). David was ready to stand up and defend the honor of his God and God's people, even against Goliath. Because of David's courage, Goliath was conquered, and the armies of God triumphed...never underestimate the power of one voice!</i></p> <p><i>This is a question we should ask today when God, His truth, His church, and His people are attacked. Is there not a cause:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When our world is shaken by tragedy? Many rally behind "their cause," is ours God? Shall we not point people to Him that has the answers and is the answer? 2. When God and His nature is attacked? Are we to defend His honor and point people to the truth? Do we sit idly by and allow Him to be defied and mocked? 3. When sin runs rampant in our society? Shall we not speak out concerning God's standard and by that standard condemn the sin? Shall we not warn lost souls? 4. When the Bible and Bible Authority are rejected? Will we speak out concerning His Word? Will we hold to it and defend it as the inspired, inerrant, immutable word of God? Will we proclaim it to others? 5. When the church and the religious world is splintered by denominationalism and false doctrine? Will we proclaim the distinctiveness of the Lord's church? Will we contend for the faith and point people back New Testament church that rightly belongs to Christ? |

THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS

By Tom Moore

This is an exciting time of the year! The Christmas season promotes family gatherings and a time of sharing **each other's love and gifts**. It is a special time of warmth and friendliness, a time when children are filled with great anticipation – great joy fills the air. This is what Christmas means to me, and these are the things I think about when I meditate on this holiday season. Yet, for most of the world, Christmas is much more than a time for family gatherings. Christmas is a time when Christendom celebrates the birth of Jesus. It is a time when you see nativity scenes, figures of angels, shepherds, and three wise men. It is a time when **you hear such phrases as, "Jesus is the reason from the season" and "Put Christ back in Christmas."** Why is it that **"most" members of the church of Christ do not celebrate Christmas** as do those among the denominational world? Is it just because we want to be different? No! Is it just because we want to be contrary? No! We do not celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday because there is no Bible authority for it. **Paul said, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name [or, the authority] of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col. 3:17).** We must have biblical authority for all that we do. Is there biblical authority for celebrating Christmas as a religious holiday? Let us see.

First, let us consider the origin and development of Christmas. The Bible is silent concerning celebration of Christmas. The celebration of Christmas did not start until some 300 years after the church was established on the day of Pentecost, in AD 33. Philip Schaff has written, **"Notwithstanding this deep significance and wide popularity, the festival of the birth of the Lord is of comparatively late institution. This may doubtless be accounted for in the following manner: In the first place no corresponding festival was presented in the Old Testament. In the second place the day and month of the birth of Christ are nowhere stated in the gospel history, and cannot be determined. "We find it [Christmas - TM] first in Rome in the time of the bishop Liberius, who on the twenty-fifth of December, 360, consecrated Marcella, the sister of St. Ambrose, nun or bride of Christ, and addressed her with the words: 'Thou seest what multitudes are come to the birth-festival of thy bridegroom.' Christmas was introduced in Antioch about the year 380, in Alexandria, where the feast of Epiphany was celebrated as the nativity of Christ, not till about 430. Chrysostom, who delivered the Christmas homily in Antioch on the 25th of December, 386, already calls it, notwithstanding its recent introduction (some ten years before), the fundamental feast, or the root from which all other Christian festivals grow forth" (History of the Christian, Vol. III, pp. 395-396).** The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that **"Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the church, and be-**

fore the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on **January 6th, March 25th or December 25th"** (Vol. 5, p. 641). Much more evidence could be given to show that Christmas was not celebrated in the first century, but this is enough to prove the point. **The word "Christmas" is really made up of two words "Christ" and "Mass," and therefore is Catholic in origin and nature.** By the 4th and 5th centuries, Catholicism had developed into a religion which was a distinct departure from the New Testament pattern. In the December 25, 1960 issue of *The Register* (a national Catholic weekly publication) we read the following: **"Christmas means 'Christ's Mass' and is so distinctively Catholic that the Puritan Parliament of 1644 abolished it in England The Puritans in Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1659 passed a law fining anybody who would celebrate it. Even after the U.S. was established, the schools were not dismissed in Boston on Christmas Day, until Catholic immigrants brought the great feast with them."**

This **"Mass of Christ" is a special Mass observed on Christmas Eve around midnight.** A Mass is a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world. Therefore, each time Mass is said, Christ is re-sacrificed. This is in total opposition to what the Bible says.

The Hebrew writer declared, "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:26-27).

The Hebrew writer later said, "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Heb. 9:24-28). Calling on Christ to be re-sacrificed time and time again is in total conflict with the Scriptures.

That Christmas did not have its origin in the Scriptures, but in Paganism and Catholicism can be easily established. For example, according to the *Worldbook* and *Americana Encyclopedias*, December 25th was probably chosen as the day of Christmas because the feast of the sun

(called “**Saturnalia**”), which was a feast held in honor of Saturn – the sun god. This Pagan holiday was further celebrated with the giving of gifts to the children and the poor, and setting slaves free. December 25th was also celebrated as the birthday of three heathen gods: Apollo, Bacchus and Osiris.

Let us note where many of the modern customs of Christmas came from. First of all, the manger scene, that is seen so often around the Christmas season, was first introduced by a Catholic named Saint Francis on December 24, 1223 AD. **The “yule log” originated with the Scandinavians, and was burned during the Yule Season. “Yule” comes from “jol” from which we get our word “jolly.” Thus, the Yule Season was to be a joyful and festive time of the year. The “yule log” was burned once a year to honor Thor, the god of thunder. When these people entered Christianity, they adopted the “yule log” as an important part of their Christmas ceremonies.**

“Holly” and “mistletoe” were considered sacred by the Celts, and was thought to have marvelous powers. The priests would pile it on their altars in sacrifice to their gods. The Druids and the Germans would hang “holly” and “mistletoe” over their doors for good fortune. Some considered “holly” sacred because to them it depicted the crown of thorns which was placed on our Savior’s head.

Strangely enough, the Armenians are said to celebrate Christmas by eating boiled spinach because they believed that Mary ate boiled spinach the night that Jesus was born. The Christmas tree is a relic of the pagan practice of using evergreens to symbolize life in the dead of winter. The ancient German tribes and those of the Scandinavian countries would worship the evergreen tree. It is said that the early church frowned on the use of the evergreen because of its association with pagan festivals. Later, however, the custom of the Christmas tree was incorporated into the observance of Christmas by the Roman Catholic Church to appease the superstitions of the newly converted.

The beginning of “Santa Clause” dates back to a so called bishop of Mrya of Lycia in the 4th century. He was called Nicholas and was considered a saint because of his good deeds; hence, we have “Jolly Ole Saint Nicholas.” He was regarded as a special friend and protector of children and widows. After his death, children began praying to him, and believed their prayers would be answered miraculously. Some believe that Santa Clause is the ghost or spirit of Saint Nicholas. The American “Santa Clause” is a corruption of the Dutch Saint Nicholas. And, of course, we know that “Santa Clause” is no more true or false than is “Old Mother Hubbard,” Jack-in-the-Bean-Stack,” “Mother Goose,” or any other fairy-tale character.

The origin of “giving gifts” is attributed to an ancient woman of Palestine who awaited the return of the “Three Kings of the Orient” who had passed her way bearing gifts to the infant Jesus. It is said that she still waits today since, unknown to her, they returned a different way. It is said that

her influence watches over the little children who hang their stockings before the hearth-fire before they went to bed on the eve of Epiphany. Good behavior in the children was rewarded with gifts, and stocking full of ashes were given to those who had misbehaved. Today this ancient custom is said to be fulfilled by Santa Clause on Christmas Eve.

The evidence is very clear that Christmas is pagan in origin and was not observed as a religious holiday by the first century Christians. So, should we participate in Christmas as a religious holiday, have special Christmas services in the worship assembly, and put a Christmas tree and the like in the church building? Should we get caught up with **the idea that “Jesus is the reason for the season?”**

The Israelites of old were well acquainted with the observance of special religious holidays. They celebrated such things as the Passover, Pentecost, feast of tabernacles, new moon, the Sabbath Jubilee and others. That is why it is so significant to notice that when the Jews became Christians, no religious days were observed. The old law was abolished, nailed to the cross (Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14). Under the new law there have been no special days set forth to be observed **other than the observance of the Lord’s Supper each first day of the week commemorating the death of our Savior (Acts 20:7).** As a matter of fact, the New Testament condemns the **observance of holy days. Paul declared, “You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain” (Gal. 4:10-11).**

Can we celebrate Christmas in any fashion? Down through the years social aspects have developed in connection with Christmas that have no religious significance. Christmas can be enjoyed in a purely secular way, much as we enjoy the 4th of July, Thanksgiving, and other national holidays. There is nothing specifically religious about national holidays; and therefore, there is nothing wrong with enjoying them, provided we keep our Christian principles. There is nothing wrong in celebrating Christmas if done in a secular way. But to observe Christmas in a religious fashion **is to be guilty of moving over to “another gospel” which Paul condemns (Gal. 1:6-10).** To observe Christmas religiously is to be guilty of adding to and taking away from the word of God (Rev. 22:18-20), and we must not go beyond the things that are written (Jude 9).

As each Christmas season rolls around there are several things that we should keep in memory: 1) Teach our children that Christmas has no, and should not have any, religious significance 2) Refrain from using decorations or greeting cards that have a religious connotation, and would give people the wrong impression 3) Be careful not to lead others into believing you observe this day religiously, 4) Treat Santa Clause as you would other fairy tale characters, and 5) Be sure we always deal with others on this or any other issue in a Christian manner. Those who desire to please God must only do what is authorized (Col. 3:17).