

The Four Greatest Events

Introduction. Men arbitrarily pick great events of history. Many times, they differ as to what each individual selects. Men also arbitrarily pick great events in people's lives, and these also will often differ. The gospel has reigned for 2,000 years. If I were to ask you what you think the greatest event that ever was, what would you say? A lot of people who probably say the birth of Christ.

This week, a large part of the world will celebrate the birth of Christ. If you go by any denominational church building this time of year, you will probably see slogans on their outdoor signs like, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas" or "Jesus is the reason for the season." Some "preachers" really like to ring this message out. Some will even ask, "What are you going to give Christ on His birthday?" Amazingly enough, even churches of Christ will have messages like these emblazoned on their buildings. A lot of congregations will organize Christmas plays and programs.

How do we know what to do? Should we just go right along with the rest of the world and celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25th? Everything we do we must do by the authority of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17). We have four great events in the Bible which surround Jesus. All of these occurred within the first thirty-three years of the gospel's history.

- I. ***The birth of Jesus -- the basis of character (Matthew 1:18-25)***
 - A. He came from God by birth of a woman (John 1:1, 14; Galatians 4:4).
 - B. He was miraculously born of God through the womb of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14).
 - C. His life was also characterized in the scriptures as a teacher and as one from God (John 3:2; 9:30-32; 20:30-31).
 - D. We must confess Him as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32; 16:16; 27:54; Luke 4:34, 41; John 11:27; Acts 8:37).

- II. ***The death of Jesus -- the basis of salvation (Colossians 1:19-22)***
 - A. His death equals the "blood" (Romans 5:9-10; Matthew 26:28).
 - B. Salvation equals forgiveness and reconciliation (Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 2:17).
 - C. The seed of Adam equals death, but the seed of God equals life (1 Corinthians 15:22).
 - D. He is the author of our salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9).

III. ***The resurrection of Jesus -- the basis of hope (1 Peter 1:3-4)***

- A. That hope is heaven (Colossians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 15:17).
- B. If Jesus was raised, we can be too (1 Corinthians 15:20-21).
- C. Resurrection is a key element of the gospel (Acts 24:15; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- D. Hope makes us strong (Romans 5:5).

IV. ***The return of Jesus -- the basis of vigilance (Acts 1:9-11)***

- A. We look to Jesus Christ, for He is on His throne (Hebrews 12:1-2; 1:3).
- B. Jesus will indeed return one day (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- C. There were signs accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem, but there would be no signs to designate the coming of the Lord (Matthew 24:36-39).
- D. Therefore, we are admonished to watch (Matthew 24:42-51; 1 Peter 4:7).

Conclusion. Only one of these events above is sanctified by a memorial (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). If we go beyond this, we are being presumptuous with God and saying, "Lord, here is my worship and you are going to accept it!" There is only one problem with a religious observance of Christmas. No Bible authority exists for it. The same problem exists with sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, using mechanical instruments of music in worship, observing the Lord's supper on Thursday, etc. In the absence of divine authority for the practice, one cannot walk by faith in observing Christmas religiously.

Christians do not celebrate Christmas as the birth of Christ because they do not think the birth of Christ is important. As a result of his birth, the whole plan of God was unfolded, and the blessings were provided. Furthermore, Christians do not celebrate Christmas because they refuse to honor or remember Christ. We wear His name and no other. We do not celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday because it is of human origin, namely the Roman Catholic Church and paganism. Christ never authorized the worship of His day of birth. God does not want His Son remembered as a baby lying in a manger, but as the suffering Savior and resurrected Redeemer!

Christians do not have to be anti-Christmas. It is not wrong for families to get together and exchange gifts. Christians do not have to be anti-holiday. There is nothing wrong with national holidays, such as July 4 and Thanksgiving. There is nothing wrong in observing December 25th as a civil holiday, just like there is nothing wrong in observing July 4th. But we need to keep it that way, without adding "religion" to it. We celebrate Valentine's Day without any religious connotation.

Christmas is not religious until made so by the participant. We must be careful not to be part of any religious services in observances of it -- candlelight services, religious plays, etc. We must be alert with schools because they will have our children participating in religious activities before we realize it. We must be careful not to leave an impression of believing it to be Christ's birthday (i.e., sending religious greeting cards, singing the religious seasonal songs, and decorating with religious ornaments).

If you are here today and realize what God really wants from you, then make the change now. In a time when so many encourage us to think about His birth, I encourage you to think about His death and what it means to you. It can mean a freedom from a life of sin and of eternal damnation. Only one great event remains: the Lord's coming. Be ready! You will participate one way or another (John 5:28-29).