

Our Lord says in Mark 7:7, "And **in vain do they worship Me**, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." When we follow the commandments of men instead of God's instructions, our worship becomes vain. If our worship is vain, it is empty, hollow, and useless. It will do us no good. If it is vain, it would be as though we had not worshipped God at all and we will be lost. When we worship in the way "we want" then God is dishonored and insulted. When we worship the way God has told us in His word, God is honored and glorified.

As we read in John 4:24, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him **must** worship Him **in spirit** and **in truth**." To worship in truth is to worship as the word of God directs. Jesus said in John 17:17, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." Since the word of God is truth, when we worship God in truth, we worship Him according to His word. The only way God will accept our worship is to follow His directions in the Bible.

God says in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." If we don't know what God says, we are going to be destroyed or lost for our lack of knowledge. It is sad to say but the vast majority of people are illiterate of God's word. They don't really know what the Bible says.

When people are ignorant of God's directions on how He is to be worshipped, they wander in spiritual darkness. Our Lord says in Matthew 15:14, "And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into the ditch." We must first have a desire to know the truth of God's will and then be willing to change when we find we are wrong and are not worshipping according to His truth. Jesus says in John 8:32, "And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Only the truth can make us free, otherwise we are still under the bondage of sin.

We may be sincere in our worship, and we must be, but we can be sincerely wrong - if we do not worship God "in truth", that is as God directs, then our worship will be vain and unacceptable to God.

Remember the story of Cain and Able one sacrifice was excepted and the others was not

Also if we try to worship God "in truth" but not "in spirit", that is not with the proper motive of honoring God and with reverence, then we are just practicing ritualism and our heart is far from it. This type of worship is also vain and unacceptable to God, for Jesus says in Matthew 15:8, "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." We must worship God both in spirit and in truth.

Now with that as our background let me read one more scripture!!

Deuteronomy 12:29-32 (KJV)

²⁹ When the LORD thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;

³⁰ Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.

³¹ Thou shalt not do so unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

³² What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Verse 31 says You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way -Which brings me to todays topic about Christmas!! Let's Pray and ask Yahweh for wisdom and understanding!!

When I was actually searching on this topic it was easy to find info From history channel!! In the early years of Christianity, the birth of Jesus was not celebrated. In the fourth century, church officials decided to institute the birth of Jesus as a holiday. Unfortunately, the Bible does not mention date for his birth. Pope Julius I chose December 25. It is commonly believed that the church chose this date in an effort to adopt and absorb the traditions of the pagan Saturnalia festival.

By holding Christmas at the same time as traditional winter solstice festivals, church leaders increased the chances that Christmas would be popularly embraced, but gave up the ability to dictate how it was celebrated.

From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was actually outlawed in Boston. Anyone exhibiting the Christmas spirit was fined five shillings. After the American Revolution, English customs fell out of favor, including Christmas. In fact, Christmas wasn't declared a federal holiday until June 26, 1870.

As late as the 1840s Christmas trees were seen as pagan symbols and not accepted by most Americans.

Jesus was actually born when?

Here is an easy way to answer this question? We all know that Jesus was 30 when he started his ministry and his ministry lasted 3 ½ years died on Passover which is march/april count 6 mths back (feb, jan dec ,nov, oct, sept)

Luke 3:22-23 (KJV) ²² And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

²³ And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

There are scriptures in the book of Luke and John that answer your question in a positive way, but first we need to lay a foundation. In Luke 3:23 we read,

"When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age . . . " (NASB).

In what season of the year did He begin His ministry? In order to know that, we have to know the time or the season of the year when He was born. We do not know the exact year of His birth but there are clues in the first chapter of Luke that can tell us the season. Luke 1:5 states:

"In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth."

1Chron. 24:1-19 tells us that King David divided Levitical duties by lot into 24 courses, or shifts, that required each course to work one full week twice a year from Sabbath noon to Sabbath noon beginning with the first week of the Hebrew calendar which always began in the fall on the Feast of Trumpets. The course of Abijah worked the ninth and tenth weeks of the year which was during Pentecost (early summer).

Luke 1:24 tells us that Elizabeth became pregnant around the time of the end of Zacharias' service. Verses 26-38 foretell of the birth of Jesus to Mary. Verse 26 says that the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary in the sixth month (of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Nov. -- Dec.) to announce the birth of Jesus. Mary became pregnant by the holy spirit about this time. Nine months later would place the birth of Jesus in the autumn of the year, or in the months of September/October.

We know Jesus was born in the fall of the year and was "about thirty" (Luke 3:23) when His ministry began. Passover always falls in the Spring of the year (in the month of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar). Jesus' first Passover observance is recorded in John 2:13, which is about 6 months after his ministry began in the fall of the previous year. Jesus kept three OTHER Passovers (for a total of four Passovers): His second Passover observance is recorded in John 5:1, His Third is recorded in John 6:4 and the fourth (and last) one with His disciples is recorded in John 11:55.

We therefore have about 6 months from Jesus' "birthday" (and beginning of his ministry) to His first Passover, then three full years from Passover to Passover, making for a ministry of three and one-half years. It is true that our Savior's ministry on the earth lasted this short 3 1/2 year period.

What is our response when we learn the truth

2 Tim 2:19 (NIV) "The Lord knows those who are his," and "everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must **turn away** from wickedness."

When at first we hear "repent or perish", it seems harsh. But as we turn, we see that it is an incredible gift to have something to **turn to**. If not for God's love, our only option would be to perish. But the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has appeared. To have the option to turn is sweet indeed.

Acts 3:19 (NIV) "Repent, then, and **turn to** God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord."

Hebrews 12:2a (NIV) Let us **fix our eyes** on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

So let's look at some more scriptures on this topic!!

Jeremiah 10:1-5 (KJV)

10 Hear ye the word which the LORD speaketh unto you, O house of Israel:² Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.³ For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. ⁴ They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. ⁵ They are upright as the palm tree, but speak not: they must needs be borne, because they cannot go. Be not afraid of them; for they cannot do evil, neither also is it in them to do good.

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain [i.e. Mount Sinai], the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "make us gods, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

(Exodus 32:1-8 RSV)"And Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." So all the people took off the rings of gold which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

"When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to The Lord." And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." "And The Lord said to Moses, "Go down; for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves;

they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them; they have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'"

Deuteronomy 12:3-8 (KJV)

³ And ye shall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire; and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods, and destroy the names of them out of that place.

⁴ Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

⁵ But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come:

⁶ And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks:

⁷ And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.

⁸ Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.

2 Timothy 3:16(KJV)

¹⁶ All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

Revelation 18:4-5 (KJV) ⁴ And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. ⁵ For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

The First Century Church did not Celebrate Christmas and Paul Didn't Do Away With God's Holydays (Feast Days)!

Many of the seeming contradictions in some of Paul's letters are due to either translation errors, or biased misinterpretation. We will go over two of the arguments that have sprung from these personal interpretations of the scripture that are most used to try to contradict the fact that Christ, His disciples, and Paul all kept the Holydays. The misinterpreted texts are found in the letter to the Colossians and the letter to the Galatians.

Now some people point to Colossians 2:16 for alleged proof that we need not observe the Sabbath, or other holy days, but let us examine it to see what it really teaches us about the early Church's practice regarding God's Appointed Times:

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days"
(Colossians 2:16)

" in meat...: or, for eating and drinking

respect: or, part " (footnote for Colossians 2:16 by translators of 1611 KJV)

The KJV translators' own alternate rendering of this verse would be as follows:

"Let no man therefore judge you for eating and drinking, or in part of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."

The Greek word translated "respect" (or "part" in the KJV footnote) is *meros* (*Strong's Concordance and Dictionary #3313*):

meros {mer'-os} from an obsolete but more primary form of *meiromai* ("to get as a section or allotment") 1) a part 1a) a part due or assigned to one 1b) lot, destiny

2) one of the constituent parts of a whole 2a) in part, partly, in a measure, to some degree, as respects a part, severally, individually 2b) any particular, in regard to this, in this respect

A more precise rendering of this verse, which agrees with most literal translations, would be:

"Do not let anyone then judge you in eating or drinking, or in any particular of a feast, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths."

What was the problem affecting the Church at Colosse? Reading verses 4, 8, & 18 will give you some insight into the situation they were in. Gnostics (*based on the Greek word "gnosis" which means "knowledge," for they considered themselves to be the "knowing ones"*) were bringing in their false doctrines which included, among other things, a complete denial of sexual and other bodily appetites--asceticism on one hand, and unrestrained indulgence of the body on the other.

They judged God's people in Colosse for the particular way in which they (the church) observed the holydays, new moons, and sabbaths--for their feasting on these days (the ascetics said "touch not, taste not"). We shall see, **Paul was addressing the problem of will-worship and self-denial (read verses 20-23) brought in by the Gnostics, and their improper judgement of the Colossian Church for feasting on God's Appointed Times.**

This Scripture does not state that the Sabbaths and Holy Days are no longer required to be observed, but rather that the Church shouldn't be judged for the manner in which they do observe them. This is not just the interpretation of Sabbath and Holy Day observers, for even "evangelical" type scholars have noted this to be the proper understanding. Notice:

"The 'judgement' seems to be criticism of the Christians' present practice, apparently of eating and drinking and enjoying Jewish festivals [i.e., God's festivals (Lev 23:2,4)], in contrast to those whose watchword was 'do not handle, do not taste, do not even touch' (Col. 2:21)." (*Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, InterVarsity Press, 1993, p.403, Douglas R. de Lacey, Ph.D, University of Cambridge, England).

"This essay provides evidence that the Pauline community at Colossae, not the opponents, practiced the temporal schemes outlined by Col 2:16....This investigation into the function of the list in Col 2:16 indicates that the Colossians Christians, not their critics, participate in a religious calendar that includes festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths." (Troy Martin, Professor at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, *New Testament Studies journal*, Spring, 1996, article: "Pagan and Judeo-Christian Time-keeping Schemes in Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16," p.107)

"The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is not that he [the ascetic judge] also imposes a ritual of feast days, but rather that he objects to certain elements of such observation." ~ (Douglas R. de Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus." In D. Carson (Ed.), *From Sabbath to Lord's Day. A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982)

Let us gain further knowledge by reading a little further in the passage.

Colossians 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17 **Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.** (KJV)

The Greek word translated "are" here in the KJV, *esti* (Strong's Concordance and Dictionary # 2076), is the third person singular present indicative of Strong's # 1510: *eimi* {i-mee'} **"to be, to exist, to happen, to be present."**

Greek scholar, Spiros Zodhiates, in his *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, also agrees that "are" in Colossians 2:17 is in the Present Indicative Active tense. He defines "present indicative" in the following manner: *"The present indicative asserts something which is occurring while the speaker is making the statement."* ~ (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, Col.2:17, p.663, and grammatical notations at p.869, PRESENT INDICATIVE, point 82).

So, we see that as Paul was writing this letter to the Church in Colosse, the Sabbath and Holy Days were at that time (as they still are presently) a shadow of good things yet to come. Jesus had already come and went a long time prior to Paul's letter, yet Paul still wrote of these blessed days as a current shadow of things to come. We keep these days, as they are "shadows of things yet to come" -- yet future.

Many modern versions of the Scripture contain another mistranslation, in verse 17. The word translated "body" in the KJV (i.e., "body *is* of Christ") is the Greek word *soma* (Strong's #4983). It is translated "body" 144 times in the KJV, as well as "bodily" 1 time in 2 Cor.10:10, and it is rendered "slave" 1 time in Rev.18:13. Some modern versions, however, use the word "substance" in place of "body" here. In a similar manner, the NIV uses the word "reality," but its translators only render *soma* as such in this one verse---elsewhere it is all "body/bodies." Col 2:19 (two verses later) contains the word *soma* and herein it is translated "body" in the NIV.

These modern "translations" of *soma* in Col 2:17 are biased, and are shown to be such in light of the fact that the translators never render "*soma*" as "reality" or "substance" in any other verse.

Thus we have:

"Do not let anyone then judge you in eating or drinking, or in any particular of a Feast, or of the New Moon, or of the Sabbaths (which are a shadow of things to come), but the Body of Christ."

The phrase "body of Christ" is used by Paul in various letters (I Cor.10:16; 12:27; and Eph. 4:12) to figuratively denote the body of believers--the Church! In this very epistle to the Colossians, he utilizes this same figure (1:18; 1:24; 2:17,19; 3:15). With this insight, the meaning of these verses is clear. Shortened to the core subject, we can read, "Do not let anyone then judge you ...except the Body of Christ."

"The preceding grammatical and syntactical investigation of the clause *to de soma tou Christou* [but the body of Christ] in Colossians 2:17 suggests that the practices mentioned in 2:16 are those of the Colossians Christians and not the opponents...Although the observance of *neomenia* [new moon] is less certain, **early Christians observe both feasts and sabbaths.**" ~(Troy Martin, *Journal of Biblical Literature*)

Paul's comments in these verses preserve the fact that the Church (including these Colossian gentile believers) were rejoicing in the observance of the 7th Day Sabbath, the New Moon, and the Annual Feasts of God, for there would have been no basis for the objections to the eating and drinking aspects of these days by the ascetics if the case were otherwise.

Another of the most used texts to attempt to discourage holyday observance is found in the book of Galatians.

Galatians 4:8-11 Howbeit then, **when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.** But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, **how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.** I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Some would bewitch you into believing that the "days, months, times, and years" are really "sabbaths, new moons, holydays, and sabbatical years." Yet, verse 8 clearly shows that "days, and months, and times, and years" were the customs observed "when ye [Galatians] **knew not God**," had false idolatrous gods, and "**observed times**" [Lev 19:26; Deut 18:10,14; 2Kings 21:6; and 2Chr 33:6]

Deuteronomy 18:9-13 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, **thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one** that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or **an observer of times**, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. **For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD:** and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. **Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.**

Paul called this observance of times that they did to false gods "weak and beggarly elements." Paul does talk to some Galatians about the law not being able to justify, but that was not the subject of this passage. You see, Paul had to fight two extremes infecting the church at Galatia. Firstly, Judaizers who insisted on circumcision as a prerequisite for Gentile converts.

Secondly, Paul faced off with the ones who took advantage of liberty in Christ and went the polar opposite of the Judaizers, even returning to observing pagan days associated with times (such as the solstice). Paul addressed both factions and the rest of the church all in the one letter and today's antinomian (lawless) translators stumble over the texts.

Will the Holydays be observed when Christ Returns?

The scriptures do show us that the Holydays will indeed be observed after the Kingdom is restored by Christ:

*Ezekiel 46:3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before the LORD **in the Sabbaths and in the New Moons.** [see also Ezek 45:17]*

*Ezekiel 44:24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to **my judgments**: and **they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies**; and **they shall hallow my Sabbaths.***

*Luke 22:15-16 And He said unto them, 'With desire I have desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, **until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.**'*

*Zechariah 14:16-19 And it shall come to pass, that **every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.** And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up **to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.***

*This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to **keep the Feast of Tabernacles.***

*Isaiah 66:22-23 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that **from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the LORD.***

Summary

So there we have it. Jesus Christ kept the holydays, the disciples kept the holydays, Paul kept the holydays, the early apostolic church kept the holydays, and even the post-apostolic church kept the holydays. We even see that the Holydays will still be featured in the new heavens and new earth. We also have been blessed to see Christ in the Holydays and how all point to Him. Now one question remains, that we will not speak an answer to, for the reader must ask of himself **"Should I be observing the biblical Holydays or Manmade Holydays"?**