

Rationalizing Idolatry

The following was sent to Blow the Trumpet in response to our page on Christmas called "Selling Idolatry". The writer offers a very common defense of this tradition.



The Letter:

As a Christian: Santa Claus is not worshipped and he is not a false God or Idol. Santa is a symbol, like many others that the church uses to convey a meaning of hope and giving, because as you may know Santa is not real. I find your video about Santa insulting, because you try and make comparisons to him with Satan through myths such as him coming down the chimney, this is a classic technique of conspirators who will use whatever links possible to try and sustain an argument even if they have no real relevance

As a Human: Everyone is entitled to celebrate in whatever way they please. To give such arguments as you have is to condemn the beliefs of others, this in itself is a contradiction of your argument that we are bringing Satan into the world through using Santa as a symbol at Christmas, when you are in fact bringing Satan into the world by condemning the beliefs of others. In a perfect world, just like the one described in the Gospel, people are free. For our world to be at peace we must accept the beliefs of others and not condemn them.

Thank you,

Name withheld

Our response:

Dear Friend,

Thank you for visiting Blow the Trumpet and for your comments regarding our page on Christmas. It is clear that you have strong feelings on this subject, as do we. Our purpose for writing is to respond to the points you presented.

First, please understand that we did not create our position regarding this tradition. It is not our doctrine. Every word of it comes straight from God Himself and is powerfully declared in the scriptures. It is the professing Christian world that makes up the Christmas/ Santa story. Furthermore, God is not impressed with it one bit. If you don't believe us just read what follows. As you read these words imagine God speaking them directly to you—for indeed He is.

We have placed our response into three broad areas based on the comments in your letter. Everything here is historical and Biblical fact. It is not a made up story. It is not some fairy tale. It is true and verifiable.

Fact #1

God did not invent Christmas, man did.

Virtually all Biblical authorities and secular historians agree that the celebration of Christ's birth did not enter the church until hundreds of years after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It was not until the fifth century that the Roman Catholic Church ordered this day to be celebrated. Furthermore, the church directed this celebration to take place on the same day as the pagan festival dedicated to worshipping the sun god.

The connection between Christmas and a variety of pagan practices is thoroughly documented. Not only the day, but its symbols, are intimately connected to religious practices embraced by the pagan world. William Walsh, a recognized authority on Christmas, writes:

“...the Christmas festival...is a gradual evolution from times that long antedated the Christian period... It was overlaid upon heathen festivals, and many of its observances are only adaptations of pagan to Christian Ceremonies.” (The Story of Santa Klaus p. 58)

Alexander Hislop, in his book, *The Two Babylons* characterized it this way:

“Long before the fourth century, and long before the Christian era itself, a festival was celebrated among the heathen at that precise time of the year, in honor of the birth of the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven; and it may fairly be presumed that, in order to conciliate the heathen, and to swell the number of the nominal adherents of Christianity, the same festival was adopted by the Roman Church, giving it only the name of Christ. This tendency on the part of Christians to meet paganism half-way was very early developed...” (p. 93)

This is just a small example of literally thousands of pages of research proving the origin of Christmas.

Our Question:

What does God say about such things?

“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.” Thou shalt not do so unto the Eternal thy God: for every abomination to the Eternal, 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. What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.” (Deut. 12:30-32)

Fact #2

Man does not get to decide for himself how he will worship God

The vast majority of professing Christianity is under the illusion that God's people have the authority to decide for themselves how they will worship the True God. As a result many argue that although the symbols of Christmas were once pagan, they have now been stripped from the hands of paganism and have been given new meanings. A leading evangelical minister once characterized these once-pagan symbols as "confiscated for Christ." But is this possible?

This is not the first time such a claim has been made. Fifteen centuries before the birth of Christ, the children of Israel were led out of Egypt with a high hand. No sooner were they free from bondage than they wanted to return to the pagan practices they had just left. While Moses was receiving the Ten

Commandments from God, the children of Israel appealed to Aaron to fashion a golden calf just like the idols of Egypt.

...the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us..." (Ex. 32:1)

Aaron consented to their request and instructed the children of Israel to gather their jewelry so that he could fashion it into an idol (Ex. 32:2-3). Aaron then made a molten calf and made a proclamation that seems unimaginable in light of the great miracles Israel witnessed in their deliverance. After making this idol, Aaron proclaimed "a feast to the Eternal." God was so angry at this behavior that He actually suggested to Moses that the children of Israel be wiped out.

Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. (Ex. 32:10)

It is clear God was furious with the Israelites for trying to "confiscate" the pagan religious practices of Egypt for use in worshiping Him. As the scriptures repeatedly demonstrate, God despises the perverse religions of man.

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God is not the slightest bit impressed with mans attempts to shape His religion. God is HOLY. It is He who tells us how He is to be worshipped—not the other way around.

Fact #3

God is not tolerant of other religions

With respect to the belief that a world at peace would be tolerant of other people's expressions of faith, consider how tolerant God is of other religions. Notice what He commanded His people to do to them as they prepared to enter the land of Canaan.

Deuteronomy 7: 1-5

When the Lord your God shall bring you into the land where you go to possess it, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you;

And when the Lord your God shall deliver them before you; you shall smite them, and utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them:

Neither shall you make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give unto his son, nor his daughter shall you take unto your son.

For they will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy you suddenly. But thus shall you deal with them;

You shall destroy their altars, break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

Exodus 34:10-13

And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:

But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:

Deuteronomy 12:1-4

These are the statutes and judgments, which ye shall observe to do in the land, which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree:

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.

Ye shall not do so unto the LORD your God.

The Bible reveals that the true God not only condemns borrowing the religious traditions of other faiths, He doesn't even want His people to utter the name of another god. It shouldn't even be whispered.

Exodus 23: 13

And in all things that I have said unto you be circumspect: and make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of your mouth.

These words may seem a bit extreme to a world that promotes tolerance. However, when it comes to religious diversity, the one True God is totally INTOLERANT. He is not a "Do your own thing" type of deity. God takes the way He is worshiped very personally.

A Final Thought

No matter how hard the professing Christian world tries to dress up the tradition of Christmas, the One True God is not fooled by the makeover. He knows where this day originated and how destructive it is.

It is undeniable that Christmas is the most anticipated time of the year for millions of Christians. It is a time of beautiful music, delicious food, bright colors, and family reunions. However, there is one thing Christmas is not; it is not now, nor has it ever been, Christian.

It is interesting that the Puritans understood this truth and as a result rejected this day. William Prynne wrote the following during the time of King Charles:

Our Christmas lords of Misrule... were derived from the Roman Saturnalia and Bacchanalian festivals; which should cause all pious Christians eternally to abominate them. (Book of Christian Folklore, p. 8)

Sadly, today we embrace them.

This is our answer. It may be painful but it is true. We reject Christmas because a WONDERFUL God who loves us commands His children to "Learn not the way of the heathen" (Jer.10: 2). We honor that command. We do not question it.

Once again the belief that Christmas goes contrary to everything God stands for is not a doctrine of our making. It is the doctrine of God Almighty. We simply believe Him. You should too.

Respectfully,

Blow the Trumpet