

## Why No Special Christmas Services?

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Folks are often surprised to learn that we have no special religious observance of the Christmas holiday. Such practices are so common place in most denominations that many people think it is odd when we don't sing Christmas songs, decorate the church building with seasonal ornaments, and conduct special worship services. Please allow us to explain.

First, it should be pointed out that there is no lack of appreciation in our hearts for the great gift of God in sending Jesus to this earth. We praise Him for this and continually express our thanks for the salvation made available to us through Christ. Obviously, Jesus could not have died for our sins if He had not first been born. We rejoice in the fulfilled prophecies surrounding His miraculous birth in Bethlehem. Hopefully, our gratitude for these blessings extends to every day of the year, not just one special holiday.

The Scriptures instruct that "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17). This means that we must have Bible authority for all of our practices. We are also warned that our worship becomes "vain" or worthless by "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). With these verses in mind, the question must be asked as to the origin of the religious observance of Christmas – where did it come from?

A search of the New Testament reveals absolutely no indication of a special annual observance of the birth of Jesus. There is no command to do so, and the earliest Christians did not have a day set aside to celebrate His birth. Historical information indicates that Lyberius of Rome in 354 A. D first designated the date of December 25th as the birthday of Christ. Obvious, the Christmas celebration became an established practice centuries after the church began. These simple observations demonstrate that this religious holiday originates with man, not God. This is the reason why we make no effort to engage in special religious activities on the day that men have appointed as Christmas.