

CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS?

Jim E. Waldron

The resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, which is the very heart of the Christian system, is an historical fact, firmly witnessed and described in the Bible, but Easter which is purported to be a celebration of Christ's resurrection is not based on scripture. At this present stage in history the "Christianity" that most people see is covered with so much tapestry from the dark ages, so much hair splitting from the various sects, so much infidelity from the modernistic theologians, and so much Judaism from the sabbatarians, that the average man despairs to find the simple life of a disciple whose only desire is to serve the humble man of Galilee.

People are generally more upset by being shown that their traditions are wrong than they are when the bible or God is attacked. Concerning Easter, for example, one finds that to criticize the Easter festival is considered by many to be virtually blasphemy, when in reality the term "Easter" comes from an ancient mythological Anglo-Saxon goddess, "Eastre" (new Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, p.273) and the Easter celebration is based on tradition not on scripture. In plain language, the simple doctrine of Christ in the New Testament has been weighted down with tradition just as the Old Testament scriptures were in Christ's time. Thus, He said to the clerics of His day, "Full well do ye reject the commandments of God, that ye may keep your tradition" (Matthew 7:9), and again he declared, "But in vain do they worship me teaching as their doctrine the precepts of men" (Mark 7:7).

When men add their traditions to the Christian system and bind them on people they rest under a curse, even as it is written, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-8). Note the warning is not to those who would abandon the Christian system as found in the New Testament, but a warning not to pervert the true gospel. It only takes the binding of human traditions and commandments to corrupt the faith "once for all delivered to the saints" -- (Jude 3).

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WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

Chuck Northrop

The Bible, because it is inspired of God (2 Timothy 3:16), answers questions about life. Peter wrote, "*According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue*" (2 Peter 1:3).

The world says that man evolved from monkeys. However, there are many consequences of such thinking. The first and foremost consequence is that it takes away the meaning of life. With such thinking man has no purpose. Man has no reason. Man is nothing more than a freak accident of nature. Such thinking leads to depression and hopelessness. A second consequence of evolution is that it gives credibility to no law. If humanity is a freak accident of nature, then life has no value. The logical end of such thinking is to extinguish the weak of humanity so the strong of humanity can be even stronger. Thus, with such thinking, if you are strong, there would be nothing wrong with killing the weak. No matter the consequence of evolutionary thinking, the fact is evolution is impossible! You cannot put two rocks into a box and shake it for a billion years and expect to find two watches that reproduce.

The Bible answers the question concerning the origin of life by stating that it is from God. In Genesis 1:27 Moses wrote, "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." Unlike evolutionary thinking, this gives value to life and leads to hope and promise. Further, it gives credence and credibility to law and morals. Since God is, we must live according to His standard of law. If we live according to His standard, we are rewarded with promise and hope.

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Jim E. Waldron

Rubel Shelly's newsletter of "the family of God at Woodmont Hills," reported (7/8/98) concerning the tenth annual "Jubilee" (July 1-4): "This year's evening crowds were not as large as they were last year. Without a Max Lucado to draw busloads of people from outside our own fellowship, we knew this would be the case. The day time crowds, however, were probably every bit as large as last year's attendance." It is apparent this year's keynote speaker, Jeff Walling did not draw the crowds like those of 1997. Speaking of Walling, the video tapes of his three evening speeches include instrumental music, a phone patch of a woman giving a public testimony before the whole assembly, a play and an apology to the denominational world.

Other speakers were Ron Adams, Rim Alexander, Rick Atchley, Joe Beam, Buddy Bell, Philip Black, Cindi Bradley, Gary Bradley, Ginger Broslat, Bill Brumit, Don Buck, Diane Cope, Mike Cope, P.C. Cotham, Bill Davis, Doug Davis, Dan Dozier, Ken Dye, Joe VanDyke, Marnie Ferree, Doug Foster, Randy Gill, Emily Gray, Fred Gray, Randy Harris, Scotty Harris, Harold Hazelip, Bob Hendren, Gary Holloway, James Kendrick, Wayne Kilpatrick, Earl lavender, Joyce Leech, Eddie Levick, Keith Luttrell, Bruce McClure, Scott McDowell, Don McLaughlin, Nancy Miller, Randy Moody, Mike Moss, Ron Newberry, Rick Oster, Jeff Payne, Gordon Rappy, John Reilly, Tom Reynolds, Mike Root, Floyd Rose, Frank Scott, Chris Seidmon, Harold Shank, Rubel Shelly, Jimmy Sites, David Slater, Toby Slough, Christ Smith, John Smith, Willard Tate, Doug Varnado, Triva Williams, Darrell Willis, Tom Winter, Jim Woodruff and Nokomis Yeldell. All these names are listed on the WorldWideWeb so everyone can know who spoke on the '98 "Jubilee." (See www.woodmont.org/wh112427.htm).

"Christian Jubilee, Inc." has in the last decade done more to divide the churches of Christ in the state of Tennessee than any other thing in this century. The Roman soldier who pierced the physical body of our Lord was not so wicked as

the leading preachers in this para-church organization, who have for ten years been slashing at the spiritual body of Christ in this state.

Faithful brethren have during this time repeatedly given proof that this corporation through its leaders has sought to restructure the churches of Christ to make them palatable to denominationalism. "Christian Jubilee, Inc." is no part of the body of Christ, yet is being used by its organizers to do what the American Christian Missionary Society did in Cincinnati in the last century. That is, to push a liberal agenda on the churches. It is a vehicle that has been driven to the point of dividing friends and families in the Nashville area. Even the *Nashville Tennessean* has documented the division among the churches in the Middle Tennessee area due to the work of "Jubilee" preachers.

Those who promote the work of this Corporation after so many years and so much warning make it clear that they will not "hold fast to the pattern of sound words" as the Holy Spirit requires (2 Tim. 1:13). These ten years have been ample time for their words and conduct to be known in order that one might properly apply God's word (John 12:48). That is, "not according to appearance (John 7:24), but according to their fruits (Matt. 7:1; 15-20). The Holy spirit requires that we "mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). We pray for them that they might come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).

THUS SAYS THE LORD

"Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it" (Jer. 6:16). And again,

"This is a rebellious people...who say to the seers, do not see, and to the prophets, do not prophesy to us right things: speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isa. 30:9-10).

GOOD ADVICE

Bryan Hodge

I remember quite well some advice an older preacher (Charles Elledge Hill, now deceased) once gave me. He told me that preachers (elders or others) should avoid being alone with a woman in counseling, Bible study, or personal visit, or in any other situation that can be avoided.

His reason was really quite simple. First, it avoids the potential for jealousy and mistrust on the part of their spouse or their own. Second, it prevents rumors and gossip from spreading. Third, it eliminates the opportunity for impropriety. In counseling sessions especially, if domestically things are not going well at home for the one being counseled, it is easy for the one receiving the attention from the counselor to develop a certain attraction for the counselor. Fourth, it avoids the "Clarence Thomas Syndrome" as I would call it. That is, it keeps one out of the situation where she is saying one thing and you are saying another, and there is no witnesses to establish what in fact did happen.

This was his reasons. As I reflect back upon what he said, I believe this to be good healthy advice for all Christians, especially for those who are married. The Bible says plainly that we ought to avoid situations that appear to be less than honorable (I Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:16-21). Certainly to do so is wise (Gen. 39:11-ff).

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(Editorial Note: Bryan Hodge's advise above is very good. Godly elders and faithful gospel preachers are most competent to give people spiritual guidance for their lives. This God expects them to do. They should, however, explain to those in need of counsel that they speak as elders or gospel preachers, not as "professional counselors." We realize sometimes individuals do need "professional help," even medical help. Also, the local church might want to contact their regular insurance provider to inquire concerning what in the industry is called "Pastoral Counseling Liability."