

Prayer List



Of Our Number

- ◆ Janice Carnley—Shoal Creek Rehabilitation Center
- ◆ Eloise Hoffman—lung cancer
- ◆ Florene Howze—health problems
- ◆ Finn Lawson—may arrive early
- ◆ Hannah Lawson—on bed rest
- ◆ Kynlie Lawson—surgery 1/6, tubes replaced, adenoids removed
- ◆ Donna Parish—injured ankle
- ◆ Brenda Ray—problems with eye

Others in Need

- ◆ Belinda Crawford—eye issues
- ◆ Bob Duke—health problems
- ◆ Freddie English—kidney issues
- ◆ Emory Harless—health issues
- ◆ Randall Joiner—neck surgery
- ◆ Brenda Mateer—stage 4 cancer
- ◆ Joann Medford—stage 4 cancer
- ◆ Thad McCall—health problems
- ◆ Mary Milsted—lung cancer
- ◆ Merle Moss—heart bypass
- ◆ Donald Sampler—neck surgery

Continued in next column...

- ◆ Roy Wooten—skin cancer
- ◆ Brenda Wooten—kidney stone
- ◆ Pray for those overseas the church has been helping
- ◆ Pray also for those who have lost loved ones, public servants, government leaders, military, those traveling, alien sinners, those fallen away, our enemies, the church here and worldwide.

To Our Visitors



We are happy and honored that you are here! Please fill out a visitor's card and give us a chance to get to know you. If you have any questions about anything said or done in Bible class or worship, please ask. We seek to give a Bible answer for everything we do (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 3:15; 4:11).

Events



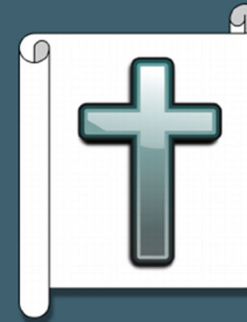
December 25
4th Wednesday Singing

Privileged to Serve



Announcements—Glenn Howze
Song Leading—David Howze (Sun.)
 Caleb Howze (Wed.)
Serving the Lord's Supper
 Head: Leo Derrick Helpers: Justin Derrick,
 Ethan Howze, Josh Lawson
Lord's Supper PM
 Head: Mark Howze
 Helper: Caleb Howze
Scripture Reading—Braden Hilburn

Faithful Worship — **1) Praying** to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 11:1-2; John 16:23; Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6); **2) Singing** without mechanical instruments (Matt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16-17; Heb. 2:12); **3) Preaching** God's Word (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:42; 20:7); **4) Giving** as prospered, cheerfully (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7); **5) The Lord's Supper** on the first day of every week (Matt. 26:26-28; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-34; 16:2; Heb. 10:23-31).



THE BAKER BULLETIN

The weekly bulletin of
The church of Christ in Baker, FL

Meeting Times

Sundays:

- 10AM Bible Class
- 11AM Worship
- 5:30PM Pew Packers
- 6PM Worship

Wednesdays:

- 7PM Bible Class

Other Information

5761 Hwy. 4
 P.O. Box 285
 Baker, FL 32531 USA
 850-669-9117

Website:

churchofChristatBaker.com

Radio Program:

104.7FM Sundays 8:30AM

Jason Hilburn's Info:

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Christians and Christmas

Barry Gilreath

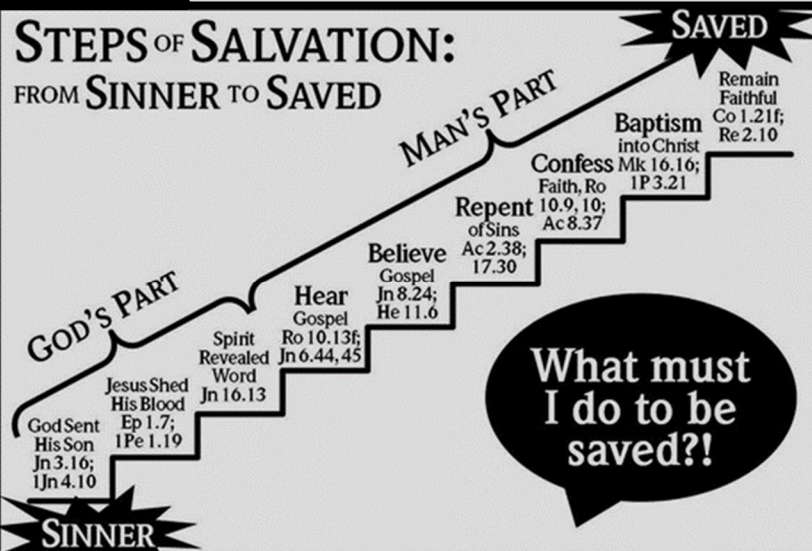
When was Jesus born? We are nearing a time of the year when most of the religious world will be celebrating the birth of Jesus. Most people assume that December 25th was the day Jesus Christ was born. It is a proposed date given by a man many years ago, that has become accepted by most religious people as fact. Was December 25th the day Christ was born? What should be the Christian's response to this assertion?

The Bible gives no date regarding the birth of Jesus. It could have fallen in one of many months. We do know that shepherds were out in the field tending to sheep on the night of his birth. This would tend to suggest that the birth, actually occurred during a warmer month other than December, but no one can be for sure. Any attempt to give an exact date is mere speculation at best.

Why was this date chosen? The date of December 25th was a date chosen by a Catholic bishop named Liberious in 354 A.D. Many disagreed with his suggested date at that time. Days in nearly every month were offered by others. At the time bishop Liberious chose to observe Christ's birth, there was another holiday observed by nonCatholics which was designated as the time to celebrate the birth of the sun. The pagan festival with its merrymaking was such a popular custom, many Catholics would celebrate Christ's birth at the time their pagan acquaintances celebrated the birth of the sun. Thus, began a long-standing tradition that is still observed by most of the religious world today.

STEPS OF SALVATION: FROM SINNER TO SAVED

"...ye were the servants of sin..."
(Romans 6:17).



"...but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17b-18).

What should the response of New Testament Christians be? Should we observe this Catholic holiday with its religious connotations? Is it wrong for Christians to celebrate December 25th as a holy day in which Jesus was born? Consider what the Bible has to say regarding these questions.

Jesus teaches that we are to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded (Matt. 28:20). Where has God commanded Christians to observe December 25th as a religious holy day? Paul warned Christians not to go beyond the things that are written (I Cor. 4:6). Is not creating and observing Christmas as a holy day going beyond what has been written? Are we not teaching our children the doctrines and commandments of men when we give religious significance to December 25th (Matt. 15:9)? God gave his people one special day. Paul told some Christians that he was afraid of them because of the days, months and seasons they observed, lest he should have labored in vain (Gal. 4:10,11). These acts and others were evidence that they were being removed from the simple gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6-8).

New Testament Christians should not Observe Christmas with a religious connotation because it is not a holy day. A day can only be holy if designated so by God. December 25th was chosen by a Catholic bishop, not by God. It is a Catholic tradition that most Protestants have embraced. "Was not this special event in history something that should be remembered?" Absolutely! However, everything that Jesus did on earth was of special significance. Name one event recorded in our New Testament that wasn't significant and shouldn't be remembered. There is not one single reference that is not of great importance. This doesn't mean that one should never study about and be thankful for his birth. However, it is one thing to study about and be thankful for Christ's birth and another thing to set aside a particular day as a holy day to observe each year.

What then can a Christian do during the holiday season? A Christian can recognize the day as a national holiday. Our country recognizes many national holidays. Recognizing a day as a national holiday doesn't require that one place any religious significance to the day. Christmas can be a time to celebrate the end of the year. It can be used as an opportunity to demonstrate love toward family and friends by giving gifts. Christians can get together for parties during the season and enjoy each other's fellowship. Christians can accept bonuses from their places of employment. Christians can take days off given by their employer. Christians can decorate their homes with seasonal items that do not suggest an observance of a religious holy day. In other words, Christians can do anything others do except place a religious significance to the day.

We need to be thankful for the birth of the Savior. We need to be thankful for the life he lived. Especially we need to be thankful for the sacrifice that he made on Calvary. This event was of more importance to humanity than any other in the history of the world. Let us not minimize the remembrance of this resurrection on the first day of every week by introducing man-made "holy days" or elevating any other event above the death, burial and resurrection that transpired in the long ago.

Overcoming "Cognitive Dissonance"

Jason Patrick Hilburn

Any person interested in religion will inevitably be exposed to new ideas he has never considered. This is a natural part of the growth process. Some ideas that seem new may actually be ancient, being rooted in sound Biblical teaching (Jeremiah 6:16). Other ideas or teachings are new because they did not come from God, but man (cf. Matthew 15:9). What should one do when he is exposed to religious information that is new to him? Should he always reject any information that contradicts what he has always believed, or should he "prove [test] all things, hold fast that which is good"? (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Obviously, he should test all things by God's Word, but when a person is exposed to an idea or teaching that contradicts what he believes, there is a tendency to reject that new information. Some may call this stubbornness, pride, or various other terms, but the psychological term is *cognitive dissonance*. Cognitive dissonance is defined by *Encyclopedia Britannica* as:

the mental conflict that occurs when beliefs or assumptions are contradicted by new information. The unease or tension that the conflict arouses in people is relieved by one of several defensive maneuvers: they reject, explain away, or avoid the new information; persuade themselves that no conflict really exists; reconcile the differences; or resort to any other defensive means of preserving stability or order in their conceptions of the world and of themselves (britannica.com).

Some may assume that nothing can be done about cognitive dissonance, but there is one thing that is so powerful, it can always overcome this problem—love! If a person loves God more than himself, more than family, more than his preacher, more than traditions, or anything else, his love for God will cause him to let go of any practices or beliefs that conflict with God's will as revealed in His Word, even if the idea of doing so is initially uncomfortable or difficult (Matthew 10:34-39; John 6:60, 67-69; Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 1 Peter 4:11). Love for God should motivate one to objectively examine all things to determine whether or not they are within God's will. If his love for God is supreme, he will reject anything contrary to God's will, regardless of how long he had believed it or how many people still believe it. Therefore, loving God with all of our hearts is always the key to overcoming this problem! "*Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matthew 22:37).