

Christmas

Do you celebrate it?

Christmas is, without question, a very sensitive subject for many Believers—and we would emphasize understanding between those who do not celebrate it, and those who celebrate it in ignorance. We cannot find in Scripture where God mandates that we observe a holiday with decorated trees, mistletoe, holly, Santa Claus, and presents. On the contrary, the Prophet Jeremiah tells us that we are to not be as the heathen who adorn trees:

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens although the nations are terrified by them; for the customs of the peoples are delusion; because it is wood cut from the forest, the work of the hands of a craftsman with a cutting tool. They decorate *it* with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers so that it will not totter” (Jeremiah 10:2-4, NASU).

This same concept is reemphasized for us in Deuteronomy 16:21: “You shall not plant for yourself an Asherah of any kind of tree beside the altar of the LORD your God, which you shall make for yourself” (NASU).

We do not celebrate Christmas, nor do we endorse a “substitute” for it, either. We do not believe that the celebration of Christmas was God’s original intention. Christmas today is highly commercialized and is often more about self-indulgence than anything else. Of course, we are not against “giving gifts,” but the purpose of Christmas today for many people, including Believers, is about *self* rather than about seeing the Messiah lifted up.

We do not celebrate Christmas. But, we are not against people remembering the birth of Yeshua, either, although it probably did not occur during the Winter. The birth of Messiah Yeshua is a part of the Bible that is to be remembered and taught upon, something appropriate for *any* time of year. So with this in mind, it is important to remember that at “Christmas time,” people are relatively free to talk about Yeshua and the gospel, and many are presented to Him who would normally not be during the rest of the year. Obviously, in spite of the questionable origins of December 25, God is going to work through those who sincerely believe that they are honoring Him.

Without question, this issue will continue to baffle many Messianic Believers in years to come, as we learn to properly deal with those who celebrate Christmas in ignorance, not knowing where it comes from. As a faith community we will need to change all the “Christmas is pagan!” rhetoric to something less sensationalistic, yet still be able to properly communicate that we do not celebrate it. We also must emphasize understanding and fairness for others in this area. Christmas as it is known today is not a Biblically mandated holiday, and on this basis we do not celebrate it. But there is also the Biblical reality of the Child born at Bethlehem who is our Savior, so with this issue, let us truly not “throw out the Baby.”

Consult the article “**The Christmas Challenge**,” for a further discussion of this issue (appearing in the *Messianic Winter Holiday Helper*).