

The Christmas Defense

How the World Justifies Sin

Over nine hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, King Solomon of Israel gave what is arguably the greatest single piece of advice in human history. If mankind heeded it all wars would cease. Hunger would vanish. Poverty would become a distant memory. Sickness and disease would be nonexistent. In essence, all human suffering would end. Everything that brings about the pain of life would evaporate. And in its place would be prosperity and fulfillment.

The advice given by this son of David is not complicated. On the contrary it is quite simple. Yet it goes ignored by virtually all mankind. Even professing Christians, who claim to live by the Holy Scriptures quietly walk by this one. Oh, they might claim to live by it, but it is clear by their behavior that they reject its message.

What is this priceless treasure spoken of by a great king whom God Himself blessed with extraordinary wisdom? What is this key that unlocks human happiness? It is recorded in the book of Proverbs and stands as the greatest "I-told-you-so" ever put in print. Here it is.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not unto your own understanding."

Proverbs 3:5

These fifteen words (13 of which are only one syllable long) constitute the perfect formula for human happiness. Additionally, they identify the cause of all human suffering. In a very real sense this great moral law was expressed by God Almighty at the very beginning.

Two Trees and a Garden

When God placed Adam and Eve in a wonderful garden paradise, He presented them with a choice. They could eat of the tree of life and have access to His wisdom and virtue forever. Or, they could rely on their own wisdom and eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God even instructed them concerning what tree was best for them. Notice His words.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17)

As a loving Father, God was committed to protecting his newly created earthly family. For this reason, He gave specific instructions concerning their very survival. These instructions identified the source of happiness as well as the source of misery and death. It is hard to imagine how anyone would decline to heed God's warning. Sadly, Adam and Eve did exactly that.

What Were the Two Trees?

Today there are numerous theories concerning the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Clearly, the tree of life would have been preferable to eat, but tragically, man declined the invitation to do so. On the other hand, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil should have been avoided at all costs. Yet that is not what happened. Why? Is it possible to know what these trees truly were? And will such an understanding provide greater insight into why mankind today makes choices that wreak havoc on human happiness? To better understand these two trees, it is critical to understand something about mankind and the way he was made.

The Moral Judgments of Men

The Bible states without ambiguity that man was never designed to be the moral authority in his own life. As difficult as this might be to believe, humanity simply does not have the proper equipment to navigate its own moral and ethical path. King Solomon clearly understood this vital truth. When writing the book of Proverbs, he made a profound observation about man and the moral choices he makes.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.
(Pro. 14:12)

Virtually all mankind has witnessed Solomon's words in action. We have seen good intentions play out to catastrophic results. Even Solomon's own life and the choices he made reflect this great moral law.

Solomon was not the only one to draw the conclusion that man was incapable of successfully managing his ethical path. The great prophet Jeremiah also pondered man's qualifications to rightly preside over his moral decisions. He concluded that man would invariably fall victim to his own moral and ethical devices. Notice his words.

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. (Jer. 17:9)

Here, Jeremiah is stating that man cannot trust his own judgment because the seat of that judgment (the heart) is not trustworthy. But there is more. King David, who the Bible describes as "a man after God's heart" (Acts 13:22), expressed a profound truth about man's inability to grasp "right" and "wrong."

Who can understand his own error? (Psa. 19:12)

The question David asked in this verse is rhetorical. The truth of the matter is that no one can understand his own error. That is why man makes so many. The point here is that man's capacity to navigate his own moral path is nonexistent. Despite his assertions to the contrary, man was never designed to be the moral authority in his own life. The great prophet Jeremiah conveyed this absolute truth in words that couldn't be more clear.

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walks to direct his own steps. (Jer. 10:23)

The words of Jeremiah state a truth that this world has rejected since the Garden of Eden. Simply put, man left to his own moral devices will invariably choose the wrong path. Jesus Christ himself understood this absolute moral law, and His life reflected this understanding. The Bible states that when Jesus walked as a man on the earth, He refused to direct His own moral steps. That's right! Even the Messiah did not rely on his own wisdom. Notice His words.

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just: because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent me. (Jn. 5:30)

The Bible categorically asserts that the Great God, who made the heavens and the earth and all things, stands as the one and only unimpeachable Moral Authority of the universe. It is He who decides what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust, what is good and what is evil. Jesus understood this principle perfectly, and because of this, He totally surrendered His moral will to the Father. He did so because He absolutely knew that His Father was the source of all that possesses virtue and goodness.

What was the forbidden fruit? It was and is MORAL SELF-DETERMINATION. It is man placing himself as the great moral judge in his own life. Man does not possess such authority because he was never given it by the one who had it to give in the first place.

When God placed the first family in the Garden of Eden and taught them how to flourish in it, His formula was simple. Trust in the Lord with all your heart (the tree of life) and lean not unto your own understanding (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil).

Regrettably, man continues to think he can navigate his own moral path, and even do so with God's blessing. Nothing more graphically demonstrates this truth than the festivals he celebrates. Consider Christmas, for example. This day is hands down the most popular celebration in professing Christianity. Unfortunately, there isn't a hint in the scriptures that God approves of it. On the contrary, the Bible condemns every part of such festivals. Furthermore, almost all professing Christian ministers are aware of this fact. Some will even reluctantly acknowledge the pagan roots of this day. However, hot on the heels of this acknowledgement is a steady stream of human arguments advanced in defense of this worldwide celebration.

The fallacy of Christmas is easy to detect for those who have come out of this world's religions and its pagan festivals. Not only do the scriptures expose these days as false, but the arguments presented by their adherents also reveal how worthless these days are. Because there is no Biblical justification for them, professing Christianity either twists God's word to defend these holidays or, they spin a tale of humanly contrived arguments designed to excuse the inexcusable. Either way the result is a lie.

What follows are five of the most popular arguments employed by the defenders of Christmas. As you read each one ask yourself if these points reflect the wisdom of God or the wisdom of men. The answer should be obvious.

Argument I Manipulating the Truth

One of the most popular arguments advanced by the proponents of Christmas is that the Bible actually condones this holiday. They offer as proof the synoptic Gospels' record of Jesus' birth. According to this reasoning, because the Bible spends several chapters describing the events surrounding the Messiah's birth and infancy, His followers can now celebrate a holiday they claim has been dedicated to this event. What they fail to grasp is that nowhere in the Bible is there even a hint that early Christians ever engaged in this celebration. This is because the apostolic church did not keep such festivals. They rightly saw such things as idolatrous. Furthermore, professing Christian leaders today disguise the fact that the timing, as well as the traditions that are so much a part of the Christmas season, come directly from pagan practices—NOT the Bible.

Cloaking Christmas in the story of Jesus' birth is one of the greatest cons ever perpetrated by the church. It is not driven by a desire to seek out God's wisdom, but rather by a desire to justify their behavior. To those who are truly honest with themselves, Christmas is nothing more than a fable pretending to have meaning. Actually, if one looks at it closely, it is hard to imagine why any Bible believer would ever want to have anything to do with it. Despite this truth, this day not only dominates the secular world but the professing Christian world as well. Why? Because it appeals to everything that is human. Those who advance the argument that because the scriptures describe Jesus' birth, they may now wrap it up in paganism and celebrate it are simply wrong. They may be well intended, but this stream of logic flies directly in the face of Proverbs 3:5.

Argument II Proclaiming the Benefits of Sin

One of the greatest arguments offered in defense of Christmas is that it brings families together. For many this is unquestionably true. During this holiday season virtually millions of celebrants come together with friends and relatives and enjoy great moments with those they love most. To Christmas keepers around the world it seems inconceivable that anyone, let alone God, would discourage such a holiday. Although this reasoning may resonate with millions of "believers," it is not biblical. On the contrary it is driven by the belief that the way something makes you feel determines its standing with God. In the words

of a famous Grammy winning Christian song of the 80's, "It can't be wrong if it feels so right." As hard as this might be to believe this is simply not true.

Throughout the Bible, God warns against judging things based on their appearance. Unfortunately, man has rejected this instruction since the beginning. The Bible even records that Eve was enticed to eat the forbidden fruit because it was "pleasant to the eye" (Gen. 3:6).

The belief that good is beautiful and that evil is ugly goes contrary to God's word. But it is totally consistent with man's thinking and Satan knows this. It is for this reason that he transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). In other words, he looks good. So do his religions and his festivals.

The fact that Christmas is beautiful and heart warming is something that is not lost on this great deceiver (Rev. 12:9). In a very real sense its beauty disguises what it really is—a pagan holiday dressed up in bright colors and wonderful feelings. What it is not is a legitimate way to honor the True God of Heaven. God is not the slightest bit impressed with festivals that come from the pagan world no matter how beautiful they are (Deut. 12:30-32).

Argument III Rehabilitating Evil

Santa Claus is arguably the most recognizable figure in the entire world. His connection to Christmas is acknowledged by both professing Christians and non-believers alike. He has even taken on mythical attributes. In a very real sense he is a god-like figure. A recent survey even indicated that more people pray to him than any other Biblical figure with the exception of Jesus Christ and Mary. Imagine that!

Even most Christians have joined in adding to the strength and virtue of this icon. Recently an article appeared on the Internet in which a hypothetical conversation takes place between Santa Claus and a "believer." In this conversation Santa is portrayed as "a servant of God." Additionally, numerous fixtures associated with Christmas, such as evergreen trees, holly and candy canes were redefined as spiritual symbols that are pleasing to the Savior of the world.

What Christianity fails to do is to tell the real story behind this tradition and its symbols, each of which comes from the pagan world. Somehow mankind believes that godless practices can be given a facelift and everything is then acceptable with the God of heaven. To illustrate this point consider the following: A leading evangelical minister once acknowledged in a sermon about Christmas that although this day and its symbols came from paganism they were now "holy" because they had been "confiscated for Christ."

This is not the first time such a claim has been made. Fifteen centuries before the birth of the Messiah, 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. As a result they persuaded Aaron to fashion a golden calf just like they had in Egypt (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). He then made a molten calf and declared, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 32:4).

Aaron then 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 (Ex. 32:10).

The idea that man can decide for himself how he will worship the God of the Bible goes contrary to every word in the scriptures. Despite this fact, man continues to engage in this practice. In essence he leans to his own understanding.

Argument IV Defining the opposition

One of the most difficult times of the year for those who refrain from celebrating the traditional holidays, is Christmas. Its influence is everywhere. You can't escape it. Even worse is how professing Christianity views those who reject this celebration. For the most part they are regarded as extremists and fanatics. Some leaders have even characterized such people as "enemies of the gospel." If you doubt this assessment just try telling your "Christian" family that you won't be keeping Christmas this year and watch the sparks fly.

Abstaining from Christmas is so far out of the religious mainstream that those who subscribe to this practice are often treated like pariahs. Even worse are the labels assigned to those with children who refrain from taking part in this festive season. Much of the western world actually considers this an act of abuse. To deprive children of Santa Claus and all those presents is considered by many as nothing short of religious depravity.

However, the reality surrounding Christmas is much different. Those who refuse to participate in this custom are actually more like Jesus and His apostles than those who embrace this festival. The founding fathers of the Christian faith never kept anything remotely close to Christmas, and for good reason. Throughout the scriptures such celebrations are condemned as idolatrous. Despite this fact, celebrants embrace the season and attack anyone who questions it.

Argument V Relying on Technical Points

One of the more prominent arguments advanced by those who keep Christmas is that Jeremiah 10, which is often cited by opponents of this holiday, is not actually referring to the Christmas tree at all. What they fail to mention is that the operative words in this chapter still stand as an indictment of this festival. In verse two God warns His people to "Learn not the way of the heathen." With this said, Christmas is unmistakably a heathen practice containing numerous symbols taken directly from pagan religions. Tragically, this fact is dismissed as irrelevant by millions of professing Christians around the world. They have somehow concluded that as long as one knows where this celebration originated (the pagan world) it is acceptable with God to integrate it into His worship. The Bible says something quite different (Dt. 12:30-32).

A Final Thought

The idea that God's people can go back into a world of sin is not a Biblical fact. It is a humanly devised fable disguised as fact. Professing Christianity has made a career of crafting such fables and integrating them into their faith. Sadly if they could just trust in the Lord with all their heart and lean not unto their own understanding, they would appreciate what God truly desires of His people.