

THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN

By ANDY MCCLISH

Undoubtedly, during this holiday season more people (in our culture, at least) will be thinking and talking about the birth of Jesus than at any other time of the year. We see the effect of this phenomenon in various marketing and advertising campaigns, music that is played on popular radio stations, greeting cards, and slogans such as, “Jesus is the reason for the season.”

The birth of Christ is certainly among the most important (supernatural) events in the overall history of the world. It was/is a cause for great joy—something which God saw fit to have recorded in His Word. It signaled the implementation and the culmination of His Scheme of Redemption, the gift of complete forgiveness, available to all mankind. However, as important as the birth of the Son of God is, it pales in comparison to His death and resurrection. Christ’s birth was simply the means God chose to bring His Son into this world. His birth was not (as is true with us) the beginning of His existence (John 1:1–2, 14). But His death and resurrection are the events without which we would all be condemned to eternal torment.

The scriptures authorize and obligate us, in very specific language, to have a special, religious observance to commemorate the **death** of Jesus (every first day of the week—Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26). The scriptures are completely silent, however, with regard to any special commemoration of His **birth**. We’re not even told when it occurred.

Lest the point of this article be misunderstood, there is nothing wrong with Christians participating in the **secular traditions** surrounding “Christmas” that have

evolved in this country. It is no different, in principle, from observing various traditions that we associate with Independence Day (e.g., fireworks and cookouts). It is good for families and friends to come together, exchange gifts, and share a special meal; and no Scriptural principles are violated by these practices.

However, we need to be careful that we don't give anyone the wrong impression about what we're doing when we celebrate "Christmas." False teaching is just as wrong on this subject as it is on any other. To put it another way, it's a mistake to do **anything** that leaves the impression that we attach **any** religious significance to this time of year. We simply have no Scriptural authority to do so (just as we have no authority for attaching any religious significance to the holiday known as "Easter"). Christmas is **not** a celebration of the birth of Christ, and we are **not** authorized to think or speak of it in such a way. Jesus is not "the reason for the season." He is the reason for our joy and hope, every single day of the year.