

ARE CHRISTMAS TREES SINFUL?

By Dr. Hoyt W. Allen, Jr.

Every year around the annual celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, someone is heard to say, "The Bible teaches that it is sinful to have a Christmas tree." This well-meaning individual usually "backs up" the statement by quoting Jeremiah 10:3,4. This passage says, "For the customs of the people are worthless; they cut a tree out of the forest, and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel. They adorn it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not totter." (N.I.V.).

Now, one will have to agree that this description does seem to fit that of a Christmas tree, unless, of course, one has an artificial tree. Then the "cutting down" would not fit.

However, if we are good students of the Scriptures, then we will look at the entire context of the chapter. When we do this, we then will discover that Jeremiah is speaking not about Christmas trees, as we know them, but about the practice of the heathen (v.2) who made idols from trees (v.3,4), graven or carved images, or molten images (v.14). In other words, it is **IDOLATRY** which is being condemned. See Isaiah 44:14,15; Daniel 5:23; Habakkuk 2:18,19, for comparative Scriptures.

Probably everyone would agree that a Christmas tree which represents a materialistic and commercialistic Christmas could become an idol. In fact, anything or anyone can become an idol (boating, fishing, hunting, any sport, crafts, job, family, education, house, etc.) if it separates us from true worship and service to God. No doubt, in our money-crazed age, man's most popular idol is money. But, money in itself is not evil. It is how we use it or are used by it that makes it evil or not (I Timothy 6:10).

So, may we understand that if a Christmas tree separates us from worshipping and serving God, then it is an idol and wrong to use. May we understand that if we do not want to celebrate the Lord's birth on an annual basis (Christmas), it is not sinful - as there is no exact Scripture to do so. However, may we not condemn those who choose to do so. But - may we not "miss the boat" by celebrating a non-commanded celebration (Christmas) and neglect commanded areas such as: **Baptism** (immersion in water, for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38); **Communion** (every Sunday - Acts 20:7); and **Godliness** (Titus 2:12).

In conclusion, may it be understood that God wants us to honor Him with our lives **365 days a year**. It is His will that we worship Him on a regular basis. If we do our part, God will keep His promises to us! May each one of us trust Him and serve Him daily!

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