

Old Christmas

Wednesday night, the invitation was on “the Advent.” As Bob mentioned a number of denominations place a lot of emphasis what they call “The Advent.” So, I decided to look it up on Wikipedia and here’s what it said: The name was adopted from Latin *adventus* "coming; arrival", translating the [Greek word *Parousia*](#). In the [New Testament](#), this is the term used for the [Second Coming of Christ](#). Thus, the season of Advent in the Christian calendar anticipates the "coming of Christ" from three different perspectives: the physical nativity in [Bethlehem](#), the reception of Christ in the heart of the believer, and the [eschatological](#), Second Coming.^[4]

What especially caught my attention was when Bob mentioned “the Advent” ending on January 6th. I recall a time called “Old Christmas” and it being on that day. This led me to reposting something I wrote a number of years ago.

Old Christmas

My sister was telling me about a conversation she had with our Grandpa Beasley. He was talking about "Old Christmas" and people observing it in January as opposed to December 25th. I decided to look this up and found that there was something called "Old Christmas."

One source said this was on January 6th which is 12 days after December 25th. This was supposedly the day the wise men showed up to see Jesus. Therefore, January 6th is the day Jesus appeared to the gentiles (the wise men) as Christ Savior.

Another and probably more reliable site give this information.

Until the time of Julius Caesar, the Roman year was organized around the phases of the moon. For many reasons this was hopelessly inaccurate, so on the advice of his astronomers, Julius instituted a calendar centered around the sun. It was decreed that one year was to consist of three hundred and sixty-five and a quarter day, divided into twelve months; the month of Quirinus was renamed 'July' to commemorate the Julian reform. Unfortunately, despite the

introduction of leap years, the Julian calendar overestimated the length of the year by eleven minutes fifteen seconds, which comes to one day every one hundred and twenty-eight years. By the sixteenth century the calendar was ten days out. In 1582, reforms instituted by Pope Gregory XIII, lopped the eleven minutes fifteen seconds off the length of a year and deleted the spare ten days. This new Gregorian calendar was adopted throughout Catholic Europe.

Protestant Europe was not going to be told what day it was by the Pope, so it kept to the old Julian calendar. This meant that London was a full ten days ahead of Paris. By the time England adopted the Gregorian calendar in the middle of the eighteenth century, England was eleven days ahead of the Continent.

A Calendar Act was passed in 1751 which stated that in order to bring England into line, the day following the 2nd of September 1752 was to be called the 14th, rather than the 3rd of September. Unfortunately, many people were not able to understand this simple maneuver and thought that the government had stolen eleven days of their lives. In some parts there were riots and shouts of 'give us back our eleven days!'

Before the calendar was reformed, England celebrated Christmas on the equivalent of the 6th of January by our modern, Gregorian reckoning. That is why in some parts of Great Britain people still call the 6th of January, Old Christmas Day. --<http://www.christmas-time.com/cp-old.html>

The above information speaks of going from September 2 to 14th in 1751. This created some problems as landlords wanted to charge peasants a full month's rent when in fact the month did not contain the full 30 days. This led to some revolts and riots among the working class.

I can add that due to the time it took for news to travel in the 1700's many people were not aware of the change from January 6th to December 25th for a number of years. Many people in Kentucky came from North Carolina and those traditions continued for a good deal of time. Perhaps this is why my Grandfather spoke of observing "Old Christmas" when he was a boy, as he

was born in 1902.

What I find interesting is that people are still bound by human traditions. "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2.8). Early Christians did not celebrate the birth of Jesus, period. They recognized the fulfillment of prophecies concerning his birth, but they did not observe a special day to remember His birth. That came about many years later. We as Christians observe His death every first day of every week, as taught in the Bible, see Matthew 26.26-28; Acts 20.7; 1 Corinthians 11.24-26. – Dennis Tucker