

Should We Celebrate Christmas?

Q) What are the origins of Christmas?

It originates from paganism. The early church did not celebrate it for the first 300 years. Deaths of special people were remembered, but not birthdays. It was originated by the early church fathers, who wished to eclipse the December 25th festivities of a rival pagan religion, that some feel threatened the existence of Christianity.

On December 25th, pagan Romans, still in the majority, celebrated Natalis Solis Invincti, "birthday of the Invincible Sun god," Mithras. The Mithras cult originated in Persia and rooted itself in the Roman world in the first century B.C. By the year 274, Mithraism was so popular with the masses that Emperor Aurelianus proclaimed it the official state religion. In the early 300's, the cult seriously threatened Christianity. It was well known that the Romans enjoyed festivals of a protracted nature. The church felt that it needed a December celebration. Thus, to offer converts an occasion to celebrate, the church officially recognized Christ's birth. To offer head on competition to the sun worshipers' popular feast, the church located the Nativity on December 25th. The mode of observance would be characteristically prayerful: a mass; in fact, Christ's Mass. As one theologian wrote in the 320s:

We hold this day holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the sun, but because of him who made it

The origination of the pagan practice of sun worship stems back to Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, the son of Noah. Nimrod who originated the Babylonish system of organized competition, of man-ruled governments and empires based upon the competitive and profit-making economic system. It was Nimrod who built the original tower of Babel, the first city of Babylon, Nineveh (the capital of Assyria and many other commercial and pagan religious centers).

Nimrod was so evil tradition says he married his own mother, Semiramis. After Nimrod's son's untimely death, Semiramis established a false Messiah or anti-Christ doctrine, which was adopted subsequently by many pagan religions. She claimed that a full-grown evergreen tree sprang overnight from a dead tree stump, which symbolized the springing forth unto new life of the dead son. On each anniversary of his birth, she claimed, Nimrod's son would visit the evergreen tree and leave gifts upon it. December 25th was the birthday of Nimrod. From Nimrod came the idea of the decorated tree.

Jeremiah 10:2-6

Thus says the Lord: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; ...3 For the customs of the peoples are futile; For one cuts a tree from the forest, The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. 4 They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers So that it will not topple. 5 They are upright, like a palm tree, and they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good." 6 Inasmuch as there is none like You, O Lord You are great, and Your name is great in might,

Other traditions:

Yuletide: The Yule log is in reality the "sun log." "Yule" means "wheel," a pagan symbol of the sun. Yet today people speak of the "sacred Yule-tide season."

Mistletoe: was used at this festival of the winter solstice because it was considered sacred to the sun, because of its supposed miraculous healing power. The pagan custom of kissing under the mistletoe was an early step in the night of revelry and drunken debauchery--celebrating the death of the "old sun" and the birth of the new at the winter solstice.

Santa Claus: St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, a saint honored by the Greeks and the Latins on the 6th of December. He was born 280 AD, in Patara, a city of Lycia, in Asia Minor. He was a rich person who traveled the country helping people. He was imprisoned for his faith for over five years. Over 2,000 churches were named after him by the 1400's. He has the legend of giving presents in secret at night; subsequently this was transferred to Christmas. A famous story about St. Nicholas is about a poor man who had no money to give to his three daughters on their wedding day. St. Nick dropped bags of gold into the stocking which the girls had left to dry by the fire. The sisters found the gold and ever since, children have hung up stockings on Christmas Eve hoping that they will be filled with presents by Christmas morning.

Q) Is it okay as a believer to celebrate Christmas?

Not the way the pagan world does. You have to evaluate whether Jesus is being honored in your life by what you do.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Q) Is it okay to have a Christmas tree?

Does your tree contain items that honor Christ? What is your motive for having a Christmas tree? Are you following the “ways (religion) of the Gentiles” as Jeremiah speaks of. The decorated tree was a form of worship and idolatry to the pagans. What does it represent to you? In the New Testament Paul said there was nothing wrong with the meat offered to idols sold in the market place, but if it offended someone’s conscience they shouldn’t do it. It is an individual decision.

1 Corinthians 14:5-6;14 One person esteems one day above another,, another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6) He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks ... I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean in itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean

Q) Is it okay to give gifts?

They may have given gifts to honor Nimrod’s dead son; we can turn it around and do in the spirit of the wise men who honored God’s Son. Jesus is the ultimate giver. He gave His life, and He gave gifts unto men. Giving is not just for December 25th, but a lifestyle.

Colossians 2:16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or anew moon or sabbaths,

Q) Is it okay to celebrate Santa Claus?

It is okay to follow those who follow Christ. Paul said,

1 Corinthians 11:1 Imitate (follow) me, just as I also imitate Christ.

St. Nicolas is a godly example to follow. I don't believe it is okay to lie to our kids about Santa Claus. They should be told the truth about him from the beginning that he was a godly man who lived long ago who people use to symbolize Christmas. If you lie to them about Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny, then maybe they will think you are lying about Jesus.

Guiding principles:

1. Honor Christ above the origins of the date. Jesus is believed to have been born in the spring, not on December 25th. His birth led to His death, burial and resurrection. That is what sets us free.
2. Don't be ignorant of the history and get caught up with the customs and materialism of this world. Much of the Christmas spirit is kept alive by the billions of dollars spent on advertising. That is the spirit of Nimrod and Babylon.
3. Give to Jesus. The Christmas season can place people in debt, and they can't give to the cause of Christ.
4. Use the celebration of Jesus birth as an opportunity to witness for Him. The angels did, *“I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11)*

What the devil intended for harm, God can turn around for good!

Should we Celebrate Christmas? We should always celebrate Jesus! He is the reason for living, not just during a holiday season.

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