

SHOULD CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?

- Christmas is a traditional holiday with both religious and secular traditions. For over 2000 years, people around the world have been observing it with customs and practices, some of which are religious and many that are not.
- Many Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, plays, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course for the kids waiting for Santa Claus to arrive.
- Some of the traditions associated with Christmas date back over 4000 years. Many of these traditions were celebrated centuries before Christ was even born. The 12 days of Christmas, the bright fires, the yule log, the giving of gifts, carnivals (parades), even carolers who sing while going from house to house and the holiday feasts
- Winter festivals have long been celebrated in pagan cultures some of which carried over into the early church. Controversy has long existed about some of the origins and practices of Christmas. Some believe the Catholic church formerly embraced this time of year to celebrate Christ' birth to combat the winter solstice festivals and church leaders believed it might increase the chances that the Christian religion would be popularly embraced.
- The exact day of the Christ' birth has never been pinpointed. Traditions say that the church has celebrated Jesus' birth since the year 98 AD. In 137 AD the church of Rome ordered the birthday of the Christ Child celebrated as a solemn feast. In 350 AD it was officially chosen, December 25th as the observance of Christmas. Many other customs and traditions have been associated with it through the years as well.
- **MANY ARGUE THAT the actual birth of Christ occurred SOMETIME IN THE SPRING – SOME CHRISTIANS WHO HELD THIS VIEW WERE CALLED FOOLS AND THUS THE ORIGIN OF APRILS FOOLS DAY BEGAN...**
- Christmas was declared a federal holiday in the United States on June 26, 1870. For most Americans - Christmas is a time for Families, Fun, and Festivities! A time of family gatherings and holiday meals. A time for Santa and singing Christmas carols. A time for ornaments, gifts, and twinkling lights. Of sleigh rides, hot cocoa, gingerbread cookies with retailers capitalizing on the public and remotely included in our society today are manger scenes and the story of Jesus!!!
- At the age of ten I remember my first 1st train set, how excited I was... When my dad and Uncles took it over, it took mom laying down the law so I could play with it. And yes, as a young boy it was all about what I got... Smiling faces on Christmas morn has brought much joy to parents who were able to give - as they have in my home

HOW OR SHOULD CHRISTIANS CLEBRATE THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY AND WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

I believe there is scriptural precedent for commemorating and remembering the birth of Christ. In keeping with the events that occurred around the time of Christ's birth These include:

1. The appearance of the angel of the Lord with the glory of the Lord to announce the birth of Christ to the shepherds (Lk. 2:10-12). (fear not, good tidings of great joy)
 2. The response of the angels at the announcement of Christ's birth (Lk. 2:13-14).
Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.
 3. The actions of the shepherds who left their flocks to go and see which was nothing short of a celebration (Lk. 2:15-20).
 4. And the arrival of the men from the east bearing gifts as much as a year to two years later (Matt. 2:1)
THERE IS REASON TO CELEBRATE!!!!
- **I BELIEVE THERE IS EVEIDENCE THAT THE EARLY CHURCH WAS AT LIBERTY TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTH OF CHRIST AS WELL AS HIS RESURRECTION – THAT WITHOUT RESTRICTION ACCORDING TO THE WORD AND WILL OF GOD**

The Christmas Holiday today is all about what you make it. It's about what's in your heart!

1. I know of no one in our culture who celebrates pagan deities. All of these ancient meanings with their beliefs and associations were lost a long time ago.
2. Christians who are tired of, or disagree with, the commercialism and vanity of this day should find a Godly alternative – especially if your parents!

IF WE CHOOSE TO FIND VAINITY IN “ANYTHING” WE CAN FIND IT – BUT IT NEEDS TO BE MORE THAN JUST AN OVER COMMERCIALIZED HOLIDAY – IT’S EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES!!!

- We can be very negative and critical, or we can be positive and use this season as a time to remember and commemorate the birth of our Savior. We can use it as a time to demonstrate love for others in a special way, to be together as families and make something good out of something commercialized.
- **DON'T MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT ON SOMETHING GOOD!!! TELL THE WORLD ABOUT OUR SAVIOR!!!!**

When Christmas roles around don't think about commercialism all around us. Think about the goodness of God sending His son in the world for you. Think about the blessings you do have with family, friends and church – Christian love, giving and sharing. We can even find meaning in the traditions and keep a spiritual perspective

- The evergreen tree is a symbol of the eternal life which Christ, the Son of God, offers to man from another tree that God chose for His son, the cross (Rev. 2:7; 22:2, 14). **DON'T MISQUOTE JEREMIAH TO ME! I'M TIRED OF THAT!**
- The presents under the tree can remind us of God's gift and our need to give of ourselves to others as those who have received God's gift of life through Christ.
- Even the history of Santa Claus can be taught simply as a man who delighted in giving gifts to children and should not be over emphasized – As a parent I say enjoy your kids but teach your kids!

CHRISTMAS - IT IS WHAT IT IS! AND IT IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT!

ALL DEPENDS ON THE SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE BY WHICH YOU MAKE IT IN YOUR HOME!

REAL MEANING OF CHRISTMAS TO YOUR FAMILY AND HOW YOU CELEBRATE OR CHOOSE NOT TO CELEBRATE IS BETWEEN YOU AND GOD!

AS FOR MY FAMILY AND I WE ENJOY THIS TIME OF YEAR AND WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!

REAL REASON THAT BABY WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM IS THIS

Mat 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

EMMANUEL – GOD WITH US AND I SAY THAT'S A STORY WORTH TELLING