

What Think You of Christmas?

There are three prevailing views of Christmas in the church today:

Three Views of Christmas

1. Some ignore the holiday completely

They claim it is not Biblical by command, example, or inference and seems to follow the custom of the heathen winter celebration which predates Jesus birth:

Jer 10:1-5

10 Hear what the Lord says to you, O house of Israel. 2 This is what the Lord says:

"Do not learn the ways of the nations

or be terrified by signs in the sky,

though the nations are terrified by them.

3 For the customs of the peoples are worthless;

They cut a tree out of the forest,

and a craftsman shapes it with his chisel.

4 They adorn it with silver and gold;

they fasten it with hammer and nails

so it will not totter.

5 Like a scarecrow in a melon patch,

Their idols cannot speak;

they must be carried

because they cannot walk.

Do not fear them;

they can do no harm

nor can they do any good."

2. Some accept the teaching started in the 4th century by the Roman church.

These accept December 25 as the birth day of Christ and accept the event as a day of worship. Hence the name Christ Mass, other practices considered by some idolatrous: the nativity scene, statues of the baby, Mary, Joseph, etc.

Other errors creep in, for example, the wise men, according to the scriptures, showed up after Jesus birth:

Matt 2:1-17

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

13 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15 where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

16 When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 1

3. Some accept the day as tradition and keep the day as a secular holiday.

These call the day Christmas and keep any random set of secular and religious features: Nativity scenes, Christmas cards and carols, special church services, believing that they are no more than a salute to the flag—one nation under God—or a slogan on a coin—in God we trust—or a patriotic song--God bless America.

With traditions coming from the cultures of pagans and false teachers, all these positions are problematic for those practicing New Testament Christianity.

Be careful not to be swept away and worship graven images and idols.

Ex 20:4-6

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Rom 1:21-23

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Be careful not to bid God's speed to the pagans and false religionists.

Eph 5:8-12

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.

Col 2:8

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Be careful to not include more than the Bible teaches in our beliefs; such Roman Mariology, Mary Queen of Heaven; Mary Mother of God.

Be careful not to ignore the context and meaning of the birth of Christ and the role of Mary.

Luke 1:35-36

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:40-45

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"

Luke 1:46-49

46 And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me –

holy is his name.

Luke 2:10-11

0 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

What is the origin of Christmas tradition?

Pagans worshipped and celebrated the Winter Solstice (Sun stands still) beginning on December 21 on our calendar, complete with gift giving. See Jer 10 above.

The Roman church placed the time of Christ's Mass on the December 25 in the 4th century to accommodate and hopefully appeal to the pagans.

Commonalties: Xmas trees, giving gifts, celebration by food and drink, and Santa Claus:

Notions of Santa Claus (also called Father Christmas, Pere Noel, Jultomten, Kriss Kringle, and many other names) are purportedly based on Bishop Nicolas of Smyrna, who lived during the fourth century in what is now Turkey, and who was later sainted. Legends of Saint Nicholas, especially those concerning his habits of secretive gift-giving and extraordinary generosity to children, eventually spread around the world. Many of these stories first came to America with the early Dutch settlers, who knew the great philanthropist as "Sinter Klaas." [Read more: <http://www.answers.com/topic/santa-claus#ixzz2FWTHf1tm>]

Conclusion: How do Christians accommodate one another if we hold different views and practices of Christmas?

Rom 14:5-6

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord.

Rom 14:7-8

7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Rom 14:9-10

9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother?

Rom 14:12

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another.

Rom 14:19

19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

Rom 14:22-23

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23 But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.