

Christmas: Separating Fact from Fiction

1. **The term “Christmas” references the birth of Jesus.**

The term Christmas actually reflects an unbiblical Catholic practice of receiving the repeated sacrifice of Jesus through the Eucharist:

And what does Christ do in the Holy Mass? He offers himself for us, as he offered himself on the Cross. He sacrifices himself for us. That is why we say that the Mass is the same Sacrifice as that of the Cross renewed in an unbloody manner on the altar. On the altar just on the Cross, Christ offers his body and blood for us. The difference is that on the Cross his body and blood were visible to the eyes of those who were present, while in the Mass they are hidden under the appearances of bread and wine. But they are really present. This is the great fact. In each Mass, Christ is really present and renews the Sacrifice of the Cross. (*The Mass Explained*, n.d.)

2. **Joseph and Mary were allowed to stay in a stable by a kind innkeeper because the inn was already full.**

There is no innkeeper mentioned in the Bible, and no “inn” if defined like a motel. The “inn” mentioned is the word for “upper room,” the normal place people would stay in a home. Since the decree required relatives to gather at their place of origin (Joseph returned to the City of David, because he was of the house and lineage of David), there would have likely been many relatives staying in homes. There was no room for the newborn infant Jesus in the upper room, so they placed him in a manger, which would have been in the attached lower animal shelter part of the home.

3. **There were several types of animals near the newly born infant Jesus.**

There are no animals spoken of in the Bible that are related to the manger. The manger suggests an animal shelter, but no animals are said to be near. It is unlikely a father and mother of a newborn would be comfortable having animals nearby.

4. **The announcement to the shepherds highlighted the fact of Jesus’ birth.**

The announcement to the shepherds highlighted the reason for Jesus’ birth (A Savior) and the identity of Jesus (Christ the Lord). The birth was the means of His arrival to be the Savior and fulfill His position as the Messiah (the Christ).

5. **The wise men arrived just after the birth of Jesus.**

The wise men likely arrived much later, when Jesus was a toddler, rather than an infant. They arrived at His home, not at the manger.

6. **Gift-giving at Christmas is based upon the gifts of the wise men.**

The wise men gave gifts to Jesus, not to one another. Their giving to Him was an acknowledgement of Jesus’ identity, and an act of worship because of who they recognized Him to be.

7. **The birth of Jesus is emphasized throughout the New Testament.**

The birth of Jesus is mentioned rarely, and only in connection with His being born of a woman – thus human (Gal 4:4), and with His being a descendant of David (Rom 1:3). The birth event itself is inconsequential after it happens.

8. **The Church has always celebrated Christmas.**

In *Puritans at Play* (1995), Bruce Colin Daniels writes “Christmas occupied a special place in the ideological religious warfare of Reformation Europe.” Most Anabaptists, Quakers, and Congregational and Presbyterian Puritans, he observes, regarded the day as an abomination while Anglicans, Lutherans, the Dutch Reformed, and other denominations celebrated the day as did Roman Catholics. When the Church of England promoted the Feast of the Nativity as a major religious holiday, the Puritans attacked it as “residual Papist idolatry.” (*Christmas in Puritan New England*, n.d.)

9. **The early Church celebrated Jesus’ birth.**

There is no indication that the early Church knew the date, celebrated Jesus’ birth, or observed anything like Christmas. The resurrection was the key historical event for Christians, and their primary focus looked forward to the second coming of Jesus. It wasn’t until the fourth century (around 350 AD), that the Church (which had become the syncretistic Catholic Church) began celebrating it, seemingly in conjunction with the Roman feast of Saturnalia, the ancient festival of the Unconquered Sun (connected to the winter solstice). (NOTE: Catholicism has historically absorbed the pagan beliefs and practices of those they influenced.)

“Evidence that the church did anything special for the observance of the birth of Jesus predating the fourth century is scant if not totally nonexistent.” (*Beyond the Christmas Lights*, December 24, 2011)

10. **We are commanded to celebrate the birth of Jesus.**

There is no command in the NT to celebrate any day. Jesus’ birthday itself is not emphasized in any way in Scripture after it takes place. Emphasizing Jesus’ birthday is not a biblically prescribed practice.

We are commanded:

- To set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. (Col 3:1-4)
- To not love the world, or the things in the world (1 John 2:15-17)

Every observance of what have been come to be known as “Christian” holidays have deep connections to pagan religious festivals and activities that have been ported over to Christianity.

11. Christmas is by and large a conservative Christian holiday whereby Jesus is worshipped as the Savior and Christ, the Lord.

“Christmas was reshaped in late 19th century America with liberal Protestantism and spirituality, commercialism, artisanship, nostalgia, and hope becoming the day's distinguishing characteristics.” (*Christmas in Puritan New England*, n.d.)

From observation, based upon the number who attend church in the USA, Christmas is largely a non-religious season where people worship the *season* itself, with its activities, apart from any close connection to God.

12. What keeps Christ in Christmas?

If Christmas references *the birth of Jesus*, then there was only one Christmas, and it occurred 2,000 years ago. Jesus cannot be removed from this historic event.

If Christmas references *the birthday of Jesus* (the annual celebration of the anniversary of Jesus' birth), it seems that giving to Jesus or doing activities that honor Jesus would be appropriate.

If Christmas references *the cultural holiday celebrated around the world*, there's no evidence that Jesus Christ has ever been in or at the center of this celebration. It largely is a humanistic, human-focused celebration defined by people who reject Jesus. Christians may superimpose Christian meaning to any holiday, as is often done, but there are no Biblical foundations for doing so.

Cf. (History of Christmas, n.d.).

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