

# The church of Christ

Home  
Introduction  
What's New

At Granby, MO

Sermons  
References  
Studies

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[Should We Celebrate  
Christmas?](#)



[Christmas](#)

## Should We Celebrate Christmas?

### Introduction:

The Christmas season is upon us. We will often hear “Jesus is the reason for the season” and “Let’s put Christ back in Christmas.” How should Christians respond? Should we celebrate it at all? Does God allow us to celebrate this holiday in certain ways? These are important questions which deserve our careful consideration. Recall that we are to “always be ready do give a defense to everyone who asks.” (I Peter 3:15) “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;” NKJV

### Body:

#### I. Was Jesus Born on December 25<sup>th</sup>?

- A. Read Luke 2:1-11. “And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And

behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, 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, who is Christ the Lord.' ” NKJV Much information about the time of His birth can be determined from this text. Shepherds would take their flocks out into the fields only during warm weather and watch over them during the night. In December it's too cold and the sheep are kept in pens. Usually the shepherds are not in the fields from mid-October to mid-March in Palestine. Also, December is part of the rainy season and it's highly unlikely a census would be taken then. So the Biblical evidence is against December 25<sup>th</sup> being the birth date of our Savior.

**B. Where did December 25<sup>th</sup>, as Jesus' birth date, originate?**

First of all, the early Christians did not celebrate the birth of Christ at all. This celebration did not originate from God, but from pagan festivals. It was not until the 4<sup>th</sup> Century that various religious groups [Roman Catholic Church] agreed to observe His birth on December 25<sup>th</sup>. That day coincided with a pagan festival, the Feast of the Sun, Winter Solstice – which celebrated the return of the sun after increasing days of darkness. December 25<sup>th</sup> was celebrated as the birth of the sun god. So Christmas [The word comes from “Christ” and “mass” – a rite or ceremony to commemorate.] was begun as a way to counter the pagan festivities connected with the worship of the sun god.

That's the origin of December 25<sup>th</sup> as the day of His birth; it is not of divine origin at all.

**II. In What Ways Does God Allow Us to Observe Christmas?**

- A. As A Religious Holiday?** As Christians, we must do all things in the name of Jesus [by His authority]. (Colossians 3:17) “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” NKJV There is simply nothing in Scripture that authorizes or allows us to observe, in a religious sense, the birth of Christ. Remember we are not to “go beyond what is written.” To celebrate Christmas in a religious sense is to be identified with groups which worship God vainly. (Matthew 15:9) “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” NKJV We need to be careful we don't fall into the same condemnation as those in Galatians 4:8-11. “But then, indeed, when you did not know God, you served those which by nature are not gods. But now after you have

known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.” NKJV Christians should avoid leaving any impression at all that we are celebrating Christmas as a religious holiday. We should refrain from placing nativity scenes in our homes or yards, sending card with religious scenes or words, having special religious services, singing religious songs about His birth that we never sing throughout the year, etc. Remember that the only day Christians are to observe in a religious sense is each Sunday, the Lord’s Day. This is the only one authorized by God. (Acts 20:7) “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” NKJV See also: (I Corinthians 11)

## **B. As A National Holiday?**

God intends for the Bible to direct our lives, including our participating or not participating in a holiday. For years Christians have understood that God allows observance of holidays as long as no unauthorized religious activity is involved. In today’s world, Christmas has both a religious and non-religious significance. Giving presents, decorating trees, making candy and such like are not necessarily associated with observing Christmas in a religious sense. This is true because even some atheists do these things. The observance of certain days, in a Non-religious sense [July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving] would fall into category of Christian liberty. (Romans 14:5-6) “One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 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 gives God thanks, and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.” NKJV {If desired, discuss why it’s alright to celebrate any holiday, in a non-religious sense, even if it had roots in pagan beliefs.}

### **Conclusion:**

We, as God’s people, have no authority to observe December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas, as the birth of Christ. The only day we are to observe in a religious sense is Sunday, the Lord’s day. But God does allow us to enjoy being with family and friends, exchanging gifts, a time of happiness.

### **Invitation:**

The greatest gift of all is Jesus, the Son of God. (John 3:16) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." NKJV

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[Home](#) | [Church of Christ Sermons](#) | [Online Bible](#) | [Church of Christ Bible Studies](#)  
[Daily Bible Reader](#) | [Bible Reference](#) | [Plan of Salvation](#) | [FAQS](#)  
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**Matt 11:28-29**

*"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."*