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Stuff that matters to Wayne

Is Christmas Good or Bad?

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As part of my ongoing '[battle against the spirit of christmas](#)' which started years back now, I continue to dig in deeper each year. This year the fire was truly kindled when our family decided that we may not go to our church's 'christmas service' next week as a form of 'personal separation' (call it protest if you want but we aren't feeling any hostility) from a practice that we believe has pagan roots. As this is a big decision with possible implications for us and the church, I continue to study the topic. Today I came across perhaps one of the best articles defending Christmas for Christians. [This article](#) nailed down most of the items and did a fairly good job trying to defend them from a biblical perspective. I will, below, take the point, summarize it, and then comment on it:

The word 'Christ-mas' means 'Christ's Mass'

The author uses this as kind of a 'proof' of its Christian origin, saying that 'Christianity took this idea from its Jewish roots' and even goes so far as to suggest that there is a possibility that 'the pagans may have adopted an already existing Christian celebration'. Unfortunately all other sources I've read up to this point suggest unanimously that Christmas didn't exist anywhere near the first church until somewhere around 300AD. Most sources agree that it was put in by the Roman Catholics. And, just the fact that he pointed out the 'mass' is a good proof that this entire Christmas thing is rooted in 'something outside of the Bible'. [Mass](#) is very much associated with the catholic church. Even if mass is considered an 'ok ritual' the question is 'why the focus on Dec 25th' and the 'magnification of the day'? And the question remains for me "Is Christ the reason for the season or was a pagan celebration slapped with a Christian-looking label and finessed for the church to try to make it fit?" But this final quote is a good quote, and a good one to support Christmas as being 'ok' for Christians to join: "We hold this day holy, not like the pagans because of the birth of the sun, but because of Him who made it."

Christ's Birthday

This section, honestly, is so weak that I didn't read it twice. Almost every source I read and most academia are in agreement that Jesus was likely *not* born anywhere near December 25th. But this author worked very, very hard to build a big defence story for keeping it on Dec. 25th - which, is kind of interesting to me....

Christmas Trees

This section was also quite good. I also know that throughout the Bible the tree has significance and often positive. "Cedars of Lebanon" and such terms of strength. His Hosea 14:8 scripture find was a great one. However, it doesn't wipe away the very most key point of the Christmas tree debate. It's not about the tree, it's about the ritual. No one would deny his tree support scriptures. There are also other wonderful symbols in the Bible like Jesus being the Living Water and the Rock. And the Holy Spirit being like a flame and such. So a tree may represent strength and the evergreen more so. No problem. However.... what happens at Christmas is the tree is (traditionally) chopped down, dragged inside, and decorated! Come again? First of all, I've always thought that God did a great job creating the fir tree by itself and made it look pretty great. I've not felt the urge to decorate them. Then there are songs like "[O' Christmas tree](#)" which, quite frankly, should creep out any born again believer. Of course, it also doesn't wipe away [Jeremiah 10](#) which seems to be painting a pretty vivid picture of a ritual of idolatry

related to a tree. Read this and you will see that God is not a fan of this practice. Try as hard as you want, but you really do have to fight hard to deny that this tree thing is steeped in something ungodly that has crept into homes and even churches. I remain firm against the tree, the more I study.

Chrismons

Interesting to read, interesting to learn about but I still see it as a 'pagan tree concept brought into the church'. It's very interesting to me how hard we fight to keep this tree in our homes! To me, this might be the biggest marvel.

Wreaths

Again, the author takes and focuses on the 'christian history' of the wreath but going back further shows that the wreath can be found in pagan rituals. I don't have a big issue with this one so far because it kind of reminds me of the crown of thorns Jesus wore - but what has that to do with his birthday? Not much.... so... strike that one, too. As a side note, I also tripped across this [nice summary](#) of mainly what I have come to believe about Christmas. The current debate that we are having with some leaders at our church is whether or not it's ok to 'celebrate Jesus' in this way and at this time or whether by doing so we are getting in bed with a 'pagan thing'. Here are some bullet point questions that we are grappling with moving forward:

- Did the first century church 'do Christmas'?
- Does it matter if the first century church 'did Christmas' or are we allowed to tack on some new things as we move forward?
- Is there any biblical basis for celebrating Christ's birth?
- Did Christ Himself ask us to focus on it as one of the most important days of the Christian calendar or is that something we have done?
- If a 'day' was originally dark, pagan or otherwise (ie. satan's birthday to be vivid) does that day hold any power over us?
- Can a 'day' be dark, demonic, dedicated to satan or otherwise?
- Is there a spiritual benefit to celebrating Christmas?
- If it were decided that Christmas was even 'partly pagan' is it ok to keep 'doing Christmas' for the sake of the unity of the church (ie. not going so might send them fleeing to other churches)?
- and more.

A few analogies that are in the middle of being debated are:

- If one were to take AC/DC's Highway to Hell song, keep the music, and change the words to 'Highway to Heaven' is the song now redeemed and ok for church/worship? The analogy here is that the 'Christians' have taken a pagan holiday and then thrown a 'Christian cover' on it.

To counteract that example given, the following was given:

- If a building used to be a whore-house, night club, casino, or concentration camp execution chamber, could it be now used as a place of worship for the children of God to gather and worship? The analogy here is that yes it's ok to 'redeem a day' if the motives are for Christ.

And so because of these two 'truths' I have yet been able to conclude my position. Both seem to be true and applicable to christmas. It will be most interesting to see where this week goes. I will attempt a post-Christmas review. Further Reading:

1. [Article by a 15 year ordained minister](#) with his top ten reasons why he doesn't do Christmas. The comments at the bottom of this post are also very thought provoking.
2. This is a [good article, from a reliable source](#). The article tries very hard to explain the history of the celebration of Christmas yet, even here it falls short of convincing me that Christmas deserves our focus. In fact, oddly it further cemented to me that history backs the pagan perspective.