

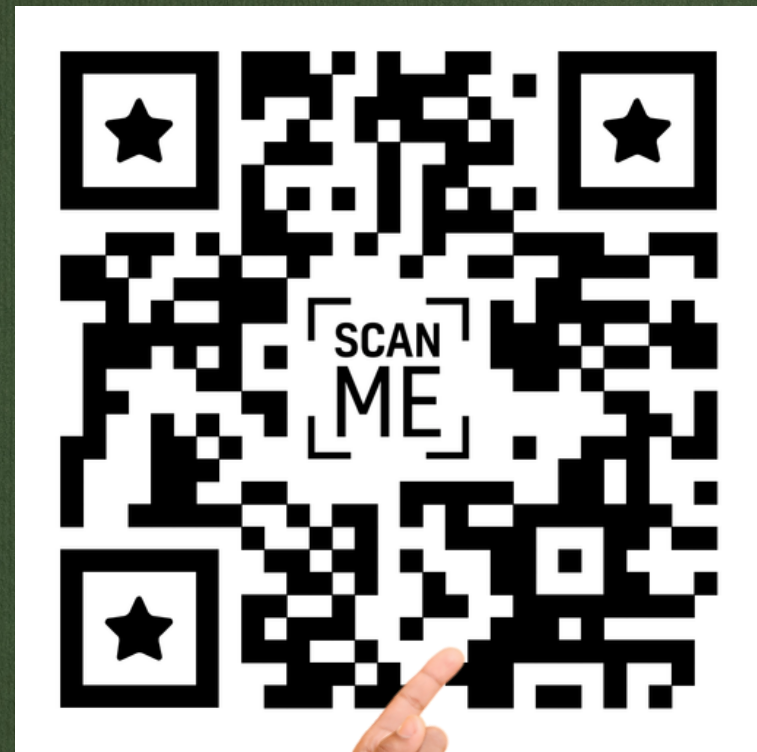


*Should Christians  
Celebrate Christmas?*

rev. ryan french



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**APOSTOLIC VOICE**  
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# Why Talk About This Subject?

"The irony of the Christmas debate reveals the strange and unlikely common ground between some Christians and Christian-hating atheists. Both groups think it is wrong and offensive to celebrate Christmas. Let me be upfront and say that I have always celebrated Christmas. However, as a conservative Christian who holds many counter-cultural beliefs, I have great respect for people's individual convictions. Just because a belief is unpopular doesn't make it wrong. But we should also add that the reverse is true: Just because a belief is unpopular doesn't make it right either. Over the past decade, I've noticed that some Christian leaders have tried to weaponize the Christmas debate to pit Christians against one another and cause division. This is ungodly and rooted in shady theology and ignorance. It unnecessarily pits families, churches, friends, and neighbors against one another."

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# The Main Secular Objection to Christmas

“They are offended by the preference of Christianity over other religions (including Saianism). And, in some cases, the elevation of any religion at all in the public domain. Their solution is dechristianizing the season and replacing it with strictly secular terminology and traditions. Santa, elves, and reindeer fit nicely into this agenda because the childish make-believe parts of Christmas have no distinctly Judeo-Christian roots. When you peel back the layers, you’ll find the secular motivation for attacking Christmas is mainly rooted in rabid Christophobia (hatred of Christianity). This alone is a compelling reason to celebrate Christmas louder and louder every year. If “pagans” consider Christmas too Christian for comfort, Christmas is not a pagan holiday. On that note, Jesus said, if you’re ashamed of me, I’ll be ashamed of you (Mark 8:38). Therefore, Christians should never shy away from any opportunity to talk about Jesus openly. Like it or not, America was founded on Judeo-Christian values. Sadly, I don’t consider us a genuinely Christian nation anymore; however, we Christians have every right, biblically and constitutionally, to voice our faith loud and long. Capitulating to secularism would be a tragic mistake and offensive to the Lord. Of course, we should never be intentionally offensive or ugly, but just celebrating the birth of our risen Savior is well within our reasonable rights. If speaking the name of Jesus or talking about Emmanuel (God with us) publicly is offensive, we must be offensive; if Christians become timid about a story as innocuous as the Messiah’s birth, we won’t have the courage to talk about His death and resurrection. I have no sympathy for the secular objections to Christmas, and you shouldn’t either.”

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# Common Christian Objections to Christmas

1. WE DON'T ACTUALLY KNOW THE DATE JESUS WAS BORN.
2. THE BIBLE DOESN'T SPECIFICALLY TELL US TO CELEBRATE JESUS' BIRTH.
3. THEY ARGUE THAT CHRISTMAS ITSELF AND ITS TRAPPINGS ARE ROOTED IN PAGANISM.
4. TWO BIBLE VERSES THAT SEEM TO FORBID CHRISTMAS TREES.
5. THE CRASS COMMERCIALS SURROUNDING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON.

“There are good and sincere people who make these objections compellingly. Others make ignorant claims that are more ludicrous and argumentative than necessary. I've certainly seen Christians from both sides of the issue display less-than-Christlike behavior when debating the abovementioned points. It's mostly ugly, unnecessary, and destroys everyone's credibility. While I believe that celebrating Christmas is a good thing (probably even a wonderful thing), I am painfully aware of how it feels to have deeply held counter-cultural convictions that others love to belittle. I have genuine sympathy for sincere Christians who simply can't feel comfortable celebrating Christmas. Regardless, I do believe anti-Christmas beliefs are not founded on concrete facts. Nor do I think anti-Christmas convictions are worthy of imposing on fellow believers.”

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# *Point by Point:* *We Don't Know the Date Jesus Was Born*

“Indeed, we don’t actually know the exact date of Jesus’ birth. And it’s improbable that Jesus was born on December 25. It’s also true that Christians didn’t start celebrating Christmas until hundreds of years after the resurrection. And my response boils down to a shrug of the shoulders. So, what? I don’t need an exact date to celebrate and reflect on my Savior’s birth. It’s nice to have an agreed-upon date so everyone can celebrate at the same time. It’s also worth remembering that early Christians were understandably busy avoiding martyrdom and being mutilated by lions. Furthermore, arguing that because early Christians didn’t celebrate, Christmas means Christmas is somehow prohibited today is a pretty awkward theological and intellectual leap. Celebrating all things about Jesus seems like something every Christian should be excited about.”

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# *Point by Point:* *The Bible Doesn't Tell Us to Celebrate Jesus' Birth*

“It’s true the Bible never specifically commands us to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The word Christmas is not in the Bible. And again, my response is a disinterested shrug of the shoulders. If the Bible prohibited celebrating the birth of Jesus, I would be all ears and entirely on board with anti-Christmas sentiments. However, Scripture gives us important details surrounding the miraculous birth of the Messiah (Matthew 1:1-24, Matthew 2:1-23, Luke 1:26-66, Luke 2:1-40, John 1:1-16). In each of these passages, angels and people celebrated the birth of Jesus. Many Old Testament prophecies revolved around Jesus’ birth (Genesis 22:18, Numbers 24:17, Isaiah 11:1, Jeremiah 23:5-6, 2 Samuel 7:12-14, Micah 5:2, Isaiah 7:14, Psalm 72:9-10, Jeremiah 31:15, Hosea 11:1, Isaiah 9:6-7). It’s safe to say many Scriptures affirm the celebration of Christ’s birth, and none forbidding it.

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# *Point by Point:* *Christmas and its Trappings are Rooted in Paganism*

“The evidence for such a claim is far from clear. The origins of so many modern traditions are unsubstantiated and often misinformed. Sources claiming Christmas’ pagan roots contradict one another and rarely have reliable verification methods. While some minor Christmas traditions like holly were probably used in pagan rituals, this doesn’t make Christmas evil by association. Many things were used in pagan rituals that we use daily. For example, oak trees were revered almost universally by pagans, and yet Christians don’t refrain from using oak trees and oak wood in their homes and yards. Even the Nike logo was originally a pagan symbol. But the association has been changed and no longer has pagan connotations. Either way, a Christian concerned about pagan symbolism could still celebrate Christmas and simply refrain from the particular traditions they find problematic. This concern doesn’t require throwing Christmas out completely.

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*Point by Point:*  
*But Even if Christmas has Pagan Origins...*

“...we speak the names of gods daily, and most people do not even realize it. Whether it's Thor's Day (Thursday) or Saturn's Day (Saturday), every day of the week, religious and non-religious people alike follow the old pagan tradition of giving thanks to the gods of old. In ancient Mesopotamia, astrologers assigned each day of the week the name of a god. Many centuries later, the Romans, upon beginning to use the seven-day week, adopted the names of the week to fit their own gods. These were then adopted by Germanic people, who also adjusted the names according to their gods. It is predominantly these Germanic and Norse gods that have lived on today in the days of the week. January, February, March, and May are named after pagan gods. The tradition of having a bridesmaid at weddings is deeply rooted in pagan superstition. Covering your mouth to yawn is pagan in origin. The Statue of Liberty and Lady Justice are replicas of pagan false gods. Even the highest honor America gives to its soldiers, the medal of honor, is covered in pagan symbols.”

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