

The Birth of Christ and Christmas

The material in this lesson is time sensitive and we suggest that you read it to your children in November or December. You may also want to read it in stages as it is slightly longer than usual.

At this time of year people are getting ready for Christmas, the day the world celebrates Christ's birthday. It looks like a fun holiday, doesn't it? The Christmas trees, pretty lights, and presents from Father Christmas (or Santa Claus) seem exciting, don't they? So why don't we keep it?

Well, it's because God doesn't tell us to celebrate it!¹ And Christmas trees, pretty lights, and Santa Claus don't have anything to do with Jesus Christ! In fact, Christmas isn't really His birthday!²

A Holiday Like Christmas

You see, many years BEFORE Jesus was born people were ALREADY celebrating a holiday like Christmas! They decorated their houses with lights and greenery from trees. They gave gifts to children and to poor people. Just like people do today. But they weren't celebrating a Christian holiday or one of God's Holy Days. They were celebrating a pagan (non-Christian) festival called Saturnalia³ - a holiday that celebrated the birth of the SUN.

Many years AFTER Jesus was born, this pagan holiday was turned into Christmas. It was turned into a "Christian" holiday to celebrate the birth of God's SON, Jesus Christ!

¹ You can find out about the days God tells us to celebrate in the Holy Day Lesson "[The Holy Days and God's Plan](#)".

² The versions of this lesson for older children show that Jesus' birthday could not have been in December and contain information about when His birthday might have been.

³ This festival, kept by Gentiles (people who worshipped false gods and idols) around the time of the Winter Solstice (the shortest day of the year), had been celebrated for thousands of years under different names. The Romans called it Saturnalia.

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But God doesn't want us to keep pagan festivals. Even if they HAVE been turned into Christian festivals! God doesn't want us to learn to live the way that pagan (non-Christian) nations do. He tells us this in His Word, the Bible (Deuteronomy 12:29-32; Jeremiah 10:1-4). So that's why we don't celebrate Christmas!

A WONDERFUL Thing

BUT this doesn't mean Christ's birth was not important! The birth of Jesus Christ was a WONDERFUL thing! His birth was SO important that God sent an angel to announce it to some shepherds who were out in a field watching their sheep that night (Luke 2:8).

The angel said: "Don't be afraid, I'm bringing you GOOD NEWS. Today Christ, the Lord, was born. He will be your Saviour and bring happiness to all people."

Then a large group of angels joined the first angel. And they all began to praise God because Jesus, the Son of God, had been born. They were full of joy because they knew that one day Jesus would rule over all the earth. They knew He would be the most wonderful King this world has ever had! (Luke 2:10-14; Isaiah 9:6-7).

This is something to remember when we hear people talking about Christmas and baby Jesus. Christmas isn't really His birthday. And Jesus ISN'T a little baby any more! He is a KING!! He is the King who will soon come to bring PEACE and HAPPINESS to the WHOLE world. No wonder the angels rejoiced when He was born!