12 Questions About Christmas

An edited exchange between Inkman and a brother in Christ in India (2026)

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1. How did the word "Christmas" come about, and how did it enter the Christian community?

Inkman's answer: Be sure to read this great article I found from the Boston Public Library: https://www.bpl.org/blogs/post/the-origins-and-practices-of-holidays-christmas/

2. What is the connection between Christmas and the birth of Christ?

Inkman's answer: It exists only in the Roman Catholic church, as far as I can tell. Christmas is a "Holy Day of Obligation" in the Catholic Church, meaning Catholics are required to attend Mass.

3. Are Christmas and Christ compatible?

Inkman's answer: Christmas is not mentioned in the Bible. It does not form a part of a Christian's worship.

4. Did the disciples or apostles ever hear about Christmas?

Inkman's answer: No, they were told to commemorate (celebrate) His *death*, not His birth.

5. Why do people celebrate Jesus's birthday after so many years?

Inkman's answer: His birth was prophesied and occurred miraculously. It marked the beginning of very special blessings for mankind.

A note of caution: It can be easy and convenient to imagine Jesus still as a baby who will accept whatever gift I come up with, rather than a King and Judge on royal throne telling us how to live.

6. Why does the world (which does not accept Christ) accept Christmas?

Inkman's answer: Many take it as a secular holiday and a time of charitable giving. Being charitable makes people feel religious but, religion aside, festive celebration and gift-giving can be enjoyable and have come to define the holiday in the minds of many.

7. Can we wish each other a Merry Christmas on Christmas Day?

Inkman's answer: Again, yes. Those activities are in keeping with treating it as a secular holiday.

8. On the Christmas holiday, is it okay to clean the house, wear new clothes, eat good food, and use firecrackers?

Inkman's answer: Sure, yes. Those activities, also, are in keeping with treating it as a secular holiday.

9. During the Christmas Day holidays, can we buy food and new clothes for poor widows, the elderly, and orphans?

Inkman's answer: Yes, these are activities of individual Christians, and we should do these things *all the time*.

10. Can we conduct a Bible study on the Christmas holiday?

Inkman's answer: Sure, yes!

11. *What Christmas carol is that?* Where does the Bible mention dancing in the streets and making noise?

Inkman's answer: Those activities are definitely not mentioned in the New Testament. **Singing** songs related to the season of the year is appropriate.

Celebrating and partying come in various forms, some innocent and wholesome, others lewd and inappropriate. Taken to an uncontrolled and carnal extreme, such activities are wrong. Romans 13:13 and Galatians 5:21 use the word "kōmos" which is translated as "revelry" and which Strong defines as follows: In the Greek writings properly, a nocturnal and riotous procession of half-drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honor of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before the houses of their male and female friends; hence, used generally, of feasts and drinking-parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry.

12. Who is Santa Claus? Why is he so popular?

Inkman's answer: My computer search (shortened) tells me:

1. **Saint Nicholas** (The Historical Root)

• Who he was: Santa's story starts with Saint Nicholas, a **4th-century** Greek Catholic bishop born in Patara (in modern-day Turkey). **Generosity**: Known for his extreme piety and kindness, he used his family inheritance to help the poor and sick. A famous legend says he secretly saved three poor sisters from being sold into slavery by tossing bags of gold through their window. **Feast Day**: He died on December 6, 343 AD, and became the patron saint of children, sailors, and merchants. His feast day was celebrated across Europe with quiet **gift-giving**.

• **Dutch Settlers**: Dutch immigrants brought the legend of Sinterklaas to **17th-century** New Amsterdam (now New York City), where "Sinterklaas" eventually morphed into Santa Claus.

• The **1823 Poem**: The anonymous poem "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (commonly known as "'Twas the Night Before Christmas", widely attributed to Clement Clarke Moore) reshaped the image of Santa. It introduced his sleigh, the rooftop chimney-entry, and eight flying reindeer.

See https://www.sttammanylibrary.org/blogs/post/the-legend-of-santa-claus-part-1-the-origin-and-history-of-a-christmas-legend/

Also, https://www.history.com/articles/santa-claus

A cultural note: We may want to avoid giving people the impression that we celebrate Christmas religiously. In that case, we may want to avoid those good activities at certain times and places.

The Roman Catholic church is not so prominent where we live, but it has a strangle hold on people in many places in Latin America. Here in my home, we put up stockings, give gifts, have parties, decorate the house with snowmen and reindeer, etc. We even have a Christmas tree (which has ancient, pagan origins, but is now simply a winter decoration for many), but we avoid using any religious symbol (such as a star, because of the star which led the magi to Jesus). We celebrate the day secularly as part of the holiday season. (Many businesses are closed, etc.) If we were to travel to Latin America in December, we probably would not celebrate Christmas at all!