

# How Not to Celebrate Christmas

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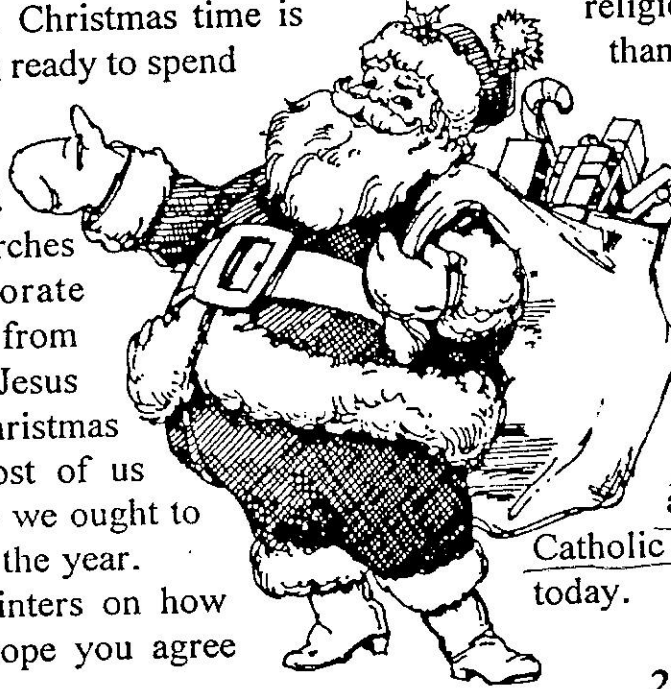
It's that time again. Holly wreaths, Christmas lights, mistletoe, candy canes, and the sound of the Salvation Army bells at every shopping center and department store are unavoidably present. Christmas time is here. Everyone is getting ready to spend a week celebrating Christmas. Children here that "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." Churches are preparing elaborate celebrations ranging from dramatizing the birth of Jesus Christ to cantatas of Christmas carols. Sad to say, most of us really have no idea how we ought to celebrate this season of the year.

Here are a few pointers on how not to celebrate it. I hope you agree with all of them.

**1. Don't put a religious significance to the season.** We celebrate a number of national holidays such

as the Fourth of July, Washington's and Lincoln's birthdays, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Veteran's Day, and Thanksgiving just to name a few. There is no more religious significance to Christmas than to any of the other holidays.

The name Christmas literally means the mass of Christ, deriving its name from Catholic Church tradition — but certainly not from Scripture. Neither Christ Jesus nor His disciples ever celebrated or observed anything resembling a Catholic mass. Neither should anyone today.



**2. Don't celebrate it as Christ's birthday.** <sup>2</sup> The Bible is as silent as a walnut about celebrating any birthdays.

<sup>3</sup> No such thing was ever thought of until long after the last apostle died. In 354 A.D. a

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Catholic "Pope" named Liberius decreed December 25 as the "official" day of Christ's birth. He may have been influenced by the pagan religions of Rome who celebrated Saturnalia at that time of year. Or he may have sought to counter the Roman celebration of Mithra, the Sun-god. Whatever his reasons, the selection of December 25 was purely arbitrary and not based on anything remotely like Scripture. It is wrong to put Christ into "Christmas." He was never in it to begin with.

**3. Don't celebrate Christmas at drinking parties.** Even if you are a teetotaler, you have no business being part of drinking parties that are allegedly celebrating the birth of the Savior. Peter wrote, *"For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles; when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries"* (1 Pet.4:3). These so-called "Christmas parties" companies hold for their employees fit the biblical description of lewdness, lust, drunkenness, revelry, and drinking parties more than any other description. Stay away from this sort of thing if you want to please the Lord.

**4. Don't celebrate Christmas with extravagance.** Sociologists know that there is more stress placed on domestic relationships at Christmas than at any other time of the year. Why? Largely because people spend money foolishly and money problems stand at the root of most domestic problems. During the Christmas season there is more adultery, divorce, intoxication, robbery, assault, and general misconduct

than during any other holiday we celebrate. Check it out. Those who ignorantly think they are celebrating the birth of Christ, spending more money than they should on useless items that are priced as high as the market allows, hardly act in keeping with Jesus who placed no premium at all on material things. Remember that it was Jesus who said, *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"* (Matt.8:20).

**5. Don't be extreme about Christmas.** Many of the customs associated with the celebration of this season of the year come from all kinds of cultures. Santa Claus is derived from "Saint Niklaus." This man was a Catholic bishop of the fourth century. He became the "patron saint" of children who adopted him as their "gift bringer." Today, Santa Claus occupies the same status as the Tooth Fairy. That's where this mythical figure belongs — keep him there.

There will be no special Christmas service at RIVER BEND — just the normal Lord's Day worship. Why not enjoy this with us? You will always find a warm welcome. ☺

—The Voice of West End, 12/15/94