



[Matthew 1:25](#)

(25) But he did not have sexual relations *with* her until *after* she had given birth to her Son, the firstborn; and he called His name Jesus.

[Matthew 2:11](#)

(11) And when they had come into the house, they found the little Child with Mary His mother, and they bowed down and worshiped Him; then they opened their treasures *and* presented their gifts to Him—gold and frankincense and myrrh.

[Luke 2:7](#)

(7) And she gave birth to her Son, the firstborn, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

A Faithful Version

An anonymous quotation that made the rounds of the Internet last year runs, "[Christmas](#) is weird. What other time of year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?" Though it may induce a chuckle from its readers, most people either miss or ignore the larger point: Christmas is a bundle of contradictions, inanities, and outright lies.

The astounding fact is that most people are aware of this. On a Christmas Eve radio show, a local preacher substituted for the regular host. His topic of discussion centered on the greeting "Merry Christmas!" and he asked if, in our multicultural, multi-religious society, this was offensive. One caller said,

no, Christianity was still the majority religion in America, but what really troubled her was the fact that professing Christians promoted the traditional lie that [Jesus](#) was born on December 25.

Without missing a beat, the preacher/talk-show host then explained to the audience that his caller was correct, Jesus could not have been born around the winter solstice, and that, in the early fourth century, the Catholic Church had combined the Roman winter solstice festival, the Saturnalia, with a celebration of Jesus' birth to help new converts adjust to Christianity. He treated these facts as common knowledge.

His "resolution" to the conundrum, however, was revealing. The gist of his answer to the troubled caller was, "If Christians would live according to the [teachings of Jesus](#), these contradictions would not matter." I had to shake my head. Neither the host nor the caller could see the self-contradictory nature of his answer. Did not Jesus teach that we are to be honest? Certainly, He did!

He tells the rich young ruler in [Matthew 19:16-18](#) that, to have eternal life, he should not bear false witness, which is the ninth commandment ([Exodus 20:16](#)). In the [Sermon on the Mount](#), He says, "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one" ([Matthew 5:37](#)). We could say, then, that keeping a celebration to Christ on a day that is not His birthday—with customs and traditions that derive from paganism—is from the evil one. It is a lie, and the Devil is the father of it ([John 8:44](#)).

This is what makes the oft-heard phrase, "Let's put Christ back into Christmas!" so laughable. It is another self-contradictory statement. How can we put Christ back into something in which He never was in the first place? Search the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and no command—not even a suggestion—to commemorate the Savior's birth will be found. It is amazing to consider that professing Christians around [the world](#) keep days and festivals never once enjoined on them in God's Word (Sunday, Good Friday, [Easter](#), [Halloween](#), Christmas), yet the ones [God](#) tells them to keep (the [Sabbath](#), [Passover](#), God's holy days), they ignore!

What about the real central character of Christmas, Santa Claus? Today's jolly old elf—a roly-poly old man in a red suit trimmed in white; big, black

boots; spectacles; long, white beard; and a "ho-ho-ho"—was the brainchild of Coca-Cola's marketing department early in the last century. He was based loosely on the English Father Christmas and the German Kris Kringle. This figure, in turn, has blended with the early "Christian" Saint Nicholas, a churchman who was known for spreading the wealth to needy members of his community, sometimes throwing sacks of coins through open windows and down chimneys. Where is the biblical basis for such a character? He may be present in the modern crèche, but no one like him appears in [the gospel](#) narratives of Jesus' birth.

Then there is the season's alternate name, Yule. Where does that come from? Check the origin in the dictionary: "a pagan midwinter festival." Another contradiction! The preacher/talk-show host made mention of this point too, chuckling about how so many people do not realize that their Yule log harkens back to the heathen practice of driving away evil spirits with bonfires on the night of the winter solstice! Now, however, it is just another way to stir up Christmas cheer! No harm in that, right?

If these pagan, unbiblical elements are so commonly known, why does the Christmas tradition continue? Three reasons come to the fore:

- » Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the [law of God](#), nor indeed can be. ([Romans 8:7](#))
- » The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? ([Jeremiah 17:9](#))
- » The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own power; and My people love to have it so. ([Jeremiah 5:31](#))

Christmas continues because human nature deceives itself into practicing things that are not right because they are enjoyable. Human nature allows people to justify self-contradictory things because they appear to produce benefits for them. In such a case, truth does not matter; all that matters is that a person receives presents and has a good time. And if a religious significance—real or imagined—can be attached to it, all the better!

We should not expect people to give up Christmas anytime soon just because it has pagan origins. Human nature has a long history of explaining such pesky details away.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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