

## Three Misconceptions about Christmas

### 1. The X Stands for Christ

We've all seen the signs wishing people a Merry Xmas. What does the X stand for in Xmas? Some claim that the X stands for Christ, while others say that this is another attempt at removing Christ from the culture? Which view is correct? In a sense, both are.

Christ is a title given to the Lord Jesus to signify that He is the Messiah. In Greek, this word is *Christos* (χριστος). Since the first Greek letter of this title (the letter chi) looks like an x in English, some have used it as an abbreviation for Christ. Many have claimed that this practice dates back to the first century, and there is solid evidence that shows this was practiced in the sixteenth century, perhaps as a cost-saving measure for those using the printing press. However, those using the abbreviation would still pronounce the X as Christ.

There is no question that many use the X today for the very purpose of eliminating Christ from the holiday that bears His title. Some may even do this in ignorance. Secularists have been working hard to remove any mention of God, Jesus, and Christianity from our culture. Should we expect anything less from those who don't know the Lord?

So what is a Christian to do? Can we use the abbreviation, or must we always write out Christmas? It is not sinful to use abbreviations, but it would definitely be wrong if a Christian used Xmas because he or she is ashamed of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:26). Christmas definitely looks better than Xmas, and as for cost-saving measures, that should not even come into the equation today!

### 2. Jeremiah 10 Forbids the Use of Christmas Trees

Some Christians have cited the tenth chapter of Jeremiah as evidence that we should not use trees in our Christmas celebrations. However, one merely needs to take a close look at the text to see that this is not the case: <sup>1</sup> *Listen to the Word that the LORD has spoken to you, family of Israel!* <sup>2</sup> *This is what the LORD has said: "Do not learn the ways of the nations, and do not be dismayed by the signs in the sky! For the nations are dismayed at them.* <sup>3</sup> *For the customs of the other peoples are worthless. For someone has cut down a tree from the forest. A carpenter's hands use a woodworking tool to prepare it.* <sup>4</sup> *They decorate it with silver and gold. They use nails and hammers to make it firm so that it will not wobble.* <sup>5</sup> *Their idols are like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch, and they cannot speak. They certainly have to be carried, because they cannot stride about. Do not be afraid of them! For they cannot do any harm, and they cannot do any good, either,"* (Jeremiah 10:1–5)

Although there seem to be some similarities to a Christmas tree in this passage, the context reveals that there is really nothing here that forbids their usage. The first 16 verses of this chapter are all about how idols are completely worthless compared to God.

These are instructions to the Israelites that they should not adopt the idolatrous ways of the Gentiles who often carved idols out of the trees they had cut down. Now, if a Christmas tree is ever elevated to the point where it becomes an idol or a stumbling block to worshipping the Lord, then it would be wrong. However, many people choose to use an evergreen tree as a reminder of the eternal life offered by Jesus Christ to all who will receive Him as their Lord and Saviour.

### 3. We Should Not Celebrate Christmas

Some people have argued that Christians should not celebrate Christmas because it was originally a pagan holiday. Others say that it shouldn't be celebrated because it is never commanded in Scripture. After all, during the Last Supper, Jesus instructed His followers to commemorate His death, but nowhere does the Bible instruct Christians to commemorate His birth.

Christmas is a time when Christians celebrate and remember Jesus Christ coming into this world to save sinners. December 25 is not necessarily the date that Jesus was born, but this does not detract from the fact that it is very important to remember Jesus and what He did for us. While we are not commanded to celebrate the birth of Christ, we do see precedent in Scripture. The angels and shepherds praised God for sending His Son into the world. Christians are definitely permitted to do this, and every day we should thank God for Christ stepping into this world!

Moreover, reminders are stressed in Scripture, such as the account of the 12 stones in Joshua 4:5-7, which were to serve as "a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

Sadly, Israel eventually forgot, and they embraced worldly ideas. This is one of the main reasons that Christians should celebrate Christmas: that we will never forget what God has done for us.