Two Paths: Following the Cross or Following the Crowd

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*Not every path that appears bright leads to life. Scripture repeatedly warns that truth is often found where few are willing to walk, while error flourishes in comfort and consensus. This image is of today that contrasts – **obedience shaped by Christ** – with – **devotion reshaped by tradition and culture**, calling us to examine not what is popular, **but what is faithful.***
(Matthew 7:13–14; Proverbs 14:12 ; Colossians 2:8)

A Word of Caution
What follows is offered with care, **not as an attack** on sincere believers. Matters of truth can be challenging, especially when long-held traditions are examined **in light of Scripture**. At times, **discomfort arises not because truth is unloving,** but because **deception** often **works quietly** and subtly, **as it has from the beginning** (Genesis 3:1–6). For readers who would benefit from a biblical explanation of how unbiblical practices take root, See Appendix A for helpful background before proceeding further.

Introduction: A Well-Meaning Error

Each December, millions worldwide celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on December 25th with sincere devotion. Yet this tradition, so deeply embedded in Western culture, rests on shaky historical, biblical, and theological foundations. This

article examines why the specific date of December 25th **lacks biblical authority, originated from post-apostolic church decisions**, and is **defended by logic** that contradicts sound biblical principles of worship.

The Etymology of "Christmas": A Name That Reveals Its Origin

Before examining the date, the **very name of the holiday is revealing**. The word **"Christmas"** is not a **generic term** for Christ's birth; it is a direct and **telling contraction**:[1]

- **Old English (c. 1038):** *Cristes Maesse* ~ Literally "Christ's Mass."

The **"Mass"** is the central liturgical[2] service in Roman Catholicism. Therefore, **the term "Christmas"** is inherently and **specifically Catholic**, directly linking the celebration to a **post-biblical liturgical system.** So, would a serious Christian Participate in a Roman Catholic Mass (Without the Eucharist)? I imagine many Protestants would refuse to attend Catholic Mass, I'd hope they would on these basis:

- It's unbiblical
- It's rooted in Catholic theology
- It adds to what Christ instituted

Yet the very name **"Christmas" = Christ's Mass** —The irony is stark. Christians reject the *service* **Christ's Mass**, but defend the *holiday named after it*.

The Biblical Silence on Christ's Birth Date

The New Testament provides no command to celebrate Christ's birth and offers no specific date for the Nativity. This silence stands in stark contrast to the clear instructions regarding Christ's death and resurrection.

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19)

The apostolic writings focus exclusively on Christ's sacrificial work. Paul emphasizes, *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."* (1 Corinthians 2:2)

Historical Origins: The Roots of December 25th

The historical record reveals that December 25th was formally established by the Roman church in the 4th century, **long after the apostolic era.** This timing deliberately aligned with existing winter festivals like Saturnalia and Sol Invictus. This was a strategic **decision to Christianize popular pagan festivals**, repurposing their holidays to ease cultural conversion.

The Paradox of the Secular Celebration: Proof of a Man-Made Tradition

One of the most revealing signs that **Christmas did not originate from Christ or the apostles**, is that it is celebrated just as eagerly by those who deny Him. This is a telling sign of Christmas's human origin as of its widespread celebration by those who reject Christ. Religious observances ordinarily belong to those who hold the faith—Hindus do not observe Ramadan,[3] nor do Buddhists celebrate Diwali,[4] **and Christians would not do so either.** Why is this, maybe because the **one who opposed Christ was the Devil himself**, and he has **tricked us** to think Christmas is of Christ and the **apostles must have approved of it also**, but that's **the lie** many have swallowed and are blind to. So, in a spirit that opposed the Savior, a conditioning has set-in to **deceive the truth of God's Word**, and Christmas became embraced by **many Christians**, and now **even the non-Christians** eagerly participate in its traditions while remaining disconnected from the Christian faith.

This disconnect demonstrates that December 25th has effectively been decoupled from genuine Christian worship and transformed into **a secular, cultural festival of consumerism and family tradition**. Its observance no longer requires faith in Christ because its foundation is **not a biblical command** but a **cultural custom**. This confirms that the holiday is, at its core, **a tradition of man** that can be adopted or discarded without impacting one's standing before God. Then the obvious why this is, and that is, it points to cognitive dissonance of the Christians; they rightly reject certain practices due to their non-biblical or pagan associations, yet give Christmas a pass despite its similar historical baggage. This **inconsistency** reveals that **tradition and cultural pressure**

often override consistent biblical application.

Next we'll look at several **practices that a sincere** biblically-minded Christian would almost universally **reject**, and you'll have to consider clear comparisons to the acceptance of Christmas. These comparisons are of other practices many a Christian would not partake in, yet think nothing of the worship of December 25th.

The Wide Gate of Christmas: Comparisons – Cultural Pressure vs. Conviction

These comparison are addressed to Christians, how **sincere** the believer is a question we must ask, however, it does not include the Unbeliever as it's understood they know no better.

1. The Worship of Icons and Statues

This is perhaps the most direct parallel. A Protestant or Evangelical Christian would never place a statue of Mary or a saint in their home, bow before it, pray to it, or venerate it. They would correctly cite the Second Commandment as an absolute prohibition:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." (Exodus 20:4-5)

The Comparison: They recognize that this practice, central to Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, originated post-apostolically and conflates the worship of the one true God

with a form of idolatry. Yet, they will place a decorated evergreen tree (a practice with clear pagan origins) in their home and bow down to place gifts under it, despite the biblical principle being identical: adopting pagan customs for worship.

2. Praying to Saints or Mary

A biblically conservative Christian finds the practice of praying to anyone but God the Father through Jesus Christ to be utterly foreign to Scripture. They point out that the New Testament model for prayer is exclusively directed to God (Matthew 6:9, Philippians 4:6). They see the intercession of saints as a later tradition that detracts from the sole mediatory role of Christ (1 Timothy 2:5).

The Comparison: They reject this practice because it's a "tradition of men" not found in the Bible. However, they embrace the entire liturgical calendar of Christmas—Advent wreaths, Christmas Eve services, December 25th observance—which is equally a "tradition of men" established centuries after the apostles, without a shred of biblical command.

3. Celebrating a Festival with Direct Pagan Dedication

Imagine a popular holiday called "Festival of Zeus" or "Day of Odin" that was later "Christianized" by a church council. A sincere Christian would recoil at the idea of celebrating it, even if it was rebranded. They would understand the biblical command in Deuteronomy 12:30-31 not to inquire about how pagans worship their gods and then do likewise.

The Comparison: This is *exactly* what happened with Christmas. It was placed on the date of the Roman festival of *Sol Invictus* (the Unconquered Sun) and the Saturnalia. The early church would have been horrified by this syncretism. Today's

Christian, who would never celebrate a “Day of Odin,” doesn’t think twice about celebrating a holiday on the “Birthday of the Unconquered Sun.”

4. The Practice of Lent and Ash Wednesday

Many Protestant denominations (particularly those in the Reformed and Baptist traditions) reject the 40-day observance of Lent, including Ash Wednesday. They correctly argue that it is a man-made invention, a later church tradition that imposes a season of penance and fasting not commanded in Scripture. They see it as subtracting from the finished work of Christ by adding a works-based observance.

The Comparison: The logic for rejecting Lent—“It’s not in the Bible; it’s a later tradition”—applies with equal force to Christmas. Both are liturgical seasons created by the same post-apostolic church hierarchy. The acceptance of one (Christmas) while rejecting the other (Lent) is based on cultural popularity, not biblical consistency.

The Core Inconsistency

The difference in treatment comes down to two factors:

1. **Cultural Entrenchment:** Christmas is so deeply woven into the fabric of Western culture that its non-biblical origins are invisible. Criticizing Christmas feels like attacking family, generosity, and joy itself.
2. **Lack of a Clear Prohibition Verse:** As will be discussed, people use the **“no command against it”** loophole. There’s no verse that says, **“Thou shalt not bring a fir tree into thy house and decorate it in December.”** However, the same is true for Lent or praying to saints—there’s no verse that explicitly says, **“Thou shalt not mark thy forehead with ashes.”** The rejection of those practices is based on a *principle* of Scripture (sola scriptura,

> the regulative principle of worship). The acceptance of Christmas represents a failure to apply that same principle consistently.

In short, a Christian who rejects icons, saint-veneration, and Lent for being unbiblical traditions of men, **but celebrates Christmas**, is being inconsistent. Their practice is governed more by cultural Christianity than by a rigorous and consistent application of **biblical authority**.

The Tyranny of the Majority: When "Might" Pressures Conscience

This cultural dominance creates a powerful **social pressure** that even affects believers. The words of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14 are instructive: *"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* The **majority path** is not necessarily the right one.

Some Christians who, upon studying Scripture, **conscientiously object** to celebrating December 25th, often face significant peer pressure—and even shunned as a heretical extremist—from within the church. They are asked, ***"Why are you ruining the holiday?"*** or accused of being divisive. This is a clear example of the principle or saying (*maybe not accurate to the tee*), that ***"might does not make right"*****,** better said ***"popularity and majority does not make right".*** The sheer number of people celebrating (*the "might" of the majority*), as just expressed, is used to justify the practice and pressure dissenters into compliance. It is a form— repeated—a form of ***"the tyranny of the majority,"*** where the popular will overwhelms individual conviction rooted in biblical

examination.

The sub-conscience is a powerful force that turns those who do not conform to reconsider and go along with the practice and bend to the pressure of the clear visual display of the majority who are wrapped up in the holiday.

As the saying goes, you may have the *power* (**social pressure**) to enforce a tradition, but that does not give you the *authority* (**a biblical mandate**) to justify it. So, why does Christmas Get a Pass—it survives scrutiny because:

1. It is **inherited**, not examined
2. It is emotionally **reinforced** from childhood
3. It is socially **protected** by **majority** pressure
4. Questioning it feels like attacking *people*, **not ideas**

This is exactly what was meant when identified as **“the tyranny of the majority.”**

Addressing the Common Defense: “No Command vs. No Prohibition”

A frequent rebuttal is: *“The Bible doesn’t command it, but it doesn’t forbid it either. Therefore, it’s a matter of Christian liberty.”*

This defense ignores the **Regulative Principle** of worship: that God alone prescribes how He is to be worshiped. Therefore, in worship, what is ***not commanded*** is, by definition, ***forbidden***.

- **Deuteronomy 12:32:** *“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”*

The **absence** of a command is decisive. The **burden of proof** lies on those who institute a holy day to find a **biblical command** for it. The *“no prohibition”* argument is spiritually dangerous, as it justifies human invention in God’s worship.

Conclusion: Returning to Biblical Authority in Worship

The celebration of **“Christ’s Mass”** on December 25th is a tradition of men; Mark 7:8, Matthew 15:3, Matthew 15:6, Colossians 2:8, Isaiah 29:13, Titus 1:14. Its **name** reveals its Catholic origin, its date **reveals** its pagan roots, its celebration by **non-believers reveals its secularization**, and its defense often relies on social pressure and flawed theology.

True worship must be ***“in spirit and in truth”*** (John 4:24), grounded in what God has commanded. The faithful path is to celebrate Christ’s incarnation **every day** through obedient living, focusing our corporate worship on the ordinances He did institute—which consistently point to His **death** and resurrection as the center of our faith. We must have the courage to choose the **“narrow gate”** of Scriptural truth over the **“broad way”** of human tradition, even when it means **standing with the minority.**

Footnotes:

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Appendix A: Biblical Pattern of Deception and Religious Tradition

Purpose of This Appendix

This appendix is provided to demonstrate that Scripture consistently warns God's people about deception that arises not through open rejection of God, but through subtle distortion, tradition, and outward religious practice. These passages are not cited to question the sincerity of believers, but to show how deception has historically operated—even among those seeking to honor God.

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1. The First Deception: The Serpent in Eden

Genesis 3:1–6

The first recorded deception in Scripture did not involve the denial of God's existence or authority. Instead, the serpent subtly questioned God's word, reframed His command, and mixed partial truth with false assurance. This established a recurring biblical pattern: deception works most effectively when it closely resembles truth while altering its meaning or intent.

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2. Satan's Character as a Deceiver

John 8:44

Jesus identifies the devil as a liar and the father of lies, indicating that deception is not an occasional tactic, but central to his nature. This establishes the foundation for understanding why Scripture repeatedly warns believers to test teachings, traditions, and practices.

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3. Deception Repeated Among God’s People

2 Corinthians 11:3

The apostle Paul directly connects the deception of Eve with the potential deception of Christians, warning that minds can be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The danger lies not in overt evil, but in subtlety—ideas that appear reasonable, religious, or well-intended.

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4. False Light and Religious Appearance

2 Corinthians 11:13–15

Paul further explains that deception often appears righteous and spiritual. Satan’s servants do not present themselves as enemies of God, but as ministers of righteousness. This explains how religious traditions may persist for generations without biblical authorization.

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5. Tradition Replacing God’s Word

Mark 7:6–9

Jesus rebukes religious leaders for elevating man-made traditions above God’s commandments. Though their practices

appeared devout, they rendered God’s word ineffective. This passage establishes a clear biblical warning against worship practices rooted in human tradition rather than divine command.

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6. Popularity Is Not Proof of Truth

Matthew 7:13–14

Christ teaches that the path leading to life is narrow and found by few, while the broad path is crowded and widely accepted. Scripture does not equate majority participation with divine approval.

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7. Conformity and Discernment

Romans 12:2

Believers are instructed not to conform to the world, but to test and prove what aligns with God’s will. This implies that widely accepted practices—even within religious culture—must be examined in light of Scripture.

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8. Warnings Against Tradition-Based Deception

Colossians 2:8

Paul warns believers against being taken captive by philosophy and vain deceit rooted in human tradition rather than Christ. This passage underscores the danger of blending religious

language with unscriptural practices.

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9. Application to Modern Religious Traditions

The consistent testimony of Scripture reveals that deception does not always manifest as outright rebellion, but often as tradition, ritual, and cultural practice that appears harmless or even reverent. Christians are therefore called to evaluate all practices—regardless of popularity or longevity—by Scripture alone.

Appendix Summary

From the serpent's subtle deception in Eden to the repeated warnings given to the early church, Scripture demonstrates that religious deception frequently arises through tradition, outward form, and cultural acceptance. Believers are exhorted to examine every practice in light of Christ's teaching and **apostolic instruction**, guarding against **assumptions** that sincerity, familiarity, or widespread observance equate to biblical authority.

This appendix is intended to aid discernment, not condemnation, and to encourage believers to test all things and hold fast to what is true.

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