

Isn't Christmas really a pagan holiday? Jesus wasn't really born on December 25th, right?

Yes and Yes. The origins of Christmas certainly do go back to old pagan celebrations. Originally, called saturnalia, after the Roman god Saturn, the date of December 25th was near the winter solstice and was a celebration that the days were once again becoming longer. Most cultures in history were agricultural and this celebration was a way to begin to look forward to the blessings of Saturn, the god of agriculture.

When the church recognized it could not stop the celebration of saturnalia, it tried to convert it to something that would fit in more with the beliefs of Christianity. So sometime in the fourth century, the church adopted saturnalia and renamed it Christmas, in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

So Jesus really wasn't born on December 25th. Then when was he really born? No one really knows. There have been attempts to show that he was born in April, September or October, but there is no real evidence to determine definitively what month he was born, let alone what date.

So should we be celebrating Christmas? If we celebrate the Christmas of the secular world, then the answer would be NO. If we are getting caught up in the hustle and bustle, overspending for gifts that we are required to buy, calling out "Happy Holidays" so we don't offend anyone and sing only Christmas carols that don't mention the name of Jesus, then we are celebrating a form of saturnalia.

However, if we are remembering what Christ has done for us by making himself nothing and taking on human form, celebrating Jesus in our hearts and making Christmas an opportunity to go into the world and make disciples of all nations, then the God who has set us free from legalistic rules and laws and died for our sins, sees into our hearts and celebrates with us.

Merry Christmas