



The Meaning of Xmas

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Should the present-day church follow an ancient custom of replacing Christ's name with an X? Should Bible believing local churches substitute the letter "X" in place of Christ in a day when secular humanists are obliged when we do this and represent their own anti-Christ agenda? What does the "X" stand for? How should Christians respond to replacing the written name of Christ with an X? These are the questions I would like to address in this brief study.

The Past Acrostic

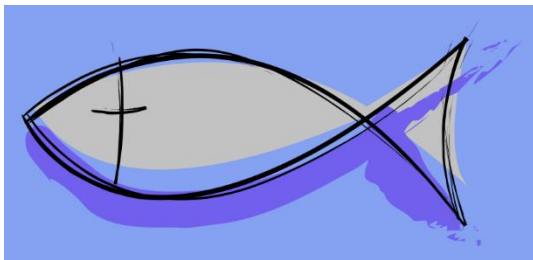
The word "Xmas" is actually a historic abbreviation for the word Christmas. This practice actually originated in the 16th century as a handwriting abbreviation for the typical pronunciation of Christmas. What we must understand is that the "X" actually comes from the Greek letter "Chi" (pronounced ki) which is the first letter of the Greek word Χριστός (Christos). Christos in English is the word for "Christ." We also know that the "mas" part of the word Christmas comes from the Latin-derived Old English word for Mass. This word has a Roman Catholic origin.

But what about the "X" that is placed before "mas?" There is a common belief promoted today that the word Xmas originated from a secular attempt to remove the religious tradition from Christmas by taking the name "Christ" out of "Christmas." However, using the "X" (ki) was actually a shortened or abbreviated form used for Christ. The English letter X actually abbreviates the first letter of the Greek name for Christ. Once again, Christos is the New Testament Greek for Christ. The first letter of the Greek word Christos is

transliterated into our alphabet as an X. That X has come through church history as a shorthand symbol for the name of Christ. In summary, some Christians have historically used the first letter in “Christos,” which is an X, as an abbreviation to represent Christ. The idea of “X” as an abbreviation for the name of Christ came into use into ancient culture with no intent to show any disrespect for Jesus.

Keep CHI
Xmas

Because
Early Christians
Used Greek Abbreviations!



Some within the organized church have also used the symbol of the fish historically as an acronym or acrostic of Jesus and Christianity. The first letters to the word fish in the Greek language (ichthus) were used by Christians to represent the Greek phrase “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.” This is how the fish became the universal symbol of Christianity. Using the first letters of a word some Christians developed an association with Jesus Christ. In a similar way, there’s a long and sacred history of the use of X (the first letter of Christos) to symbolize the name of Christ, and from its origin, it has meant no disrespect toward Christ. So, according to the actually history of “Xmas” as an abbreviation for “Christmas,” they are equivalent in meaning except their lettering.

Although writing guides such as those issued by the New York Times, The Christian Writer’s Manual of Style, and Oxford Press discourage the use of Xmas in formal writing, at one time, it was a popular practice, particularly with religious scribes, who may have have started the whole “Xmas” thing in the first place. The practice of using the symbol “X” in place of Christ’s name has been going on among religious scholars for at least 1000 years. Although some Christians have adopted this abbreviation and shortened form for Christ and Christmas in the past, we must now face our religious climate of today, and see if this is an appropriate measure or practice to be adopted in our present time (the 21st century).

The Present Usage

Things change! It is proper today to abbreviate the name Christ or omit the name Christ from Christmas? Should we take the word “Christ” and supplement the word “X” in its place? In 1977, the Governor of New Hampshire issued a press release stating that journalists should cease taking the “Christ” out of “Christmas” since “Xmas” was a pagan spelling of Christmas. Well, we have learned that historically Christmas was not a pagan spelling for Christ. However, it’s equally true that today secular humanism and atheists have in one sense hijacked this shortened version of Christmas (Xmas) to serve their own end and anti-Christ agenda. Our modern-day culture does not know the Greek meaning and history of Xmas and therefore to promote it today seems to play in the hands of our pagan culture and society.

Everyone understands what we mean when writing out the name “Christ” instead of abbreviating it. Writing out Christ’s name is preferred today in light of the atheistic push to take Christ out of Christmas and society. Secular humanism is happy when the word “X-Mass” is substituted for Christmas since the actual name of Christ in the English speaking world is removed.

Franklin Graham in an interview on CNN said this about abbreviating Christmas as X-mas: “For us as Christians, this is one of the most holy of the holidays, the birth of our savior Jesus Christ. And for people to take Christ out of Christmas. They’re happy to say merry Xmas. Let’s just take Jesus out. And really, I think, a war against the name of Jesus Christ.”

In light of the day and hour in which we live, Christians should not resort to an ancient custom of abbreviating the name Christ in the word Christmas. Instead, they should update their expression of the word Christmas by not deleting Christ’s actual name but writing it out in the English language. Why? So a paganized and progressive society in which we live will know where we stand as Christians. A pagan world does not cringe at an “X” but they do hate and despise Jesus Christ (John 15:18).

We are living in the 21st century – not the fifth century. We need to counter the distortions of secular humanism, even the pagan distortions of the

historic Christian use of “X” for Christ, and take the clearest possible stand against their evil agenda today (2 Cor. 6:17). This would involve refraining to substitute the word “X” for Christ instead of writing out the name of Christ. Spelling the name “Christ” in Christmas sends a very clear message to our modern-day culture. As Christians, we fully support Jesus Christ, His birth, His death, and salvation which He offers to mankind. We are the follower of Christ – not an X.

The Biblical Example

Luke 2:11 records:

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is **Christ** the Lord.”

The Bible does not read:

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is **X** the Lord.”

This is an important point that should not be overlooked. The Bible does not abbreviate the name “Christ” as an “X” and neither should we. God has never given His Church the permission to abbreviate the blessed name of Christ. Spell it out! Make it clear to everyone. Let the 21st century world know that you are a Christian (not a X-ian) and that you promote Christmas (not an X-mas) and that you worship Christ – not an X. This makes good sense to me. *Sometimes we try and follow traditions instead of the truth.* Jesus condemned the Pharisees for this sort of thing (Mark 7:1-8). The Bible always records the name Christ and never abbreviates it. Let’s do the same thing in our speech, writings, church signs, and on our Christmas cards. If we follow the example of the Bible, we will set the right example for today’s culture.

We cannot go wrong when following the Biblical way to express Christ. Since the Bible spells out His name, Christians should do the same thing. No one will misunderstand us when we do this and everyone will know that we are supporting Christ. In a world of ever-increasing humanistic ideology and rhetoric, let’s get rid of all the abbreviations and acronyms and spell out the words clearly – CHRIST, CHRISTIANITY, CHRISTMAS – not X, X-ianity, and X-mas.

Clarity in Witnessing

Acts 8:5

“Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.”

Christians are not called upon to preach and reveal an “X” to people but Christ (Acts 3:20, 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 1:18). The early New Testament Christians proclaimed and presented the name of Christ in a very clear and open fashion. There were no fishes or X’s but only Christ. Presenting Christ’s name in a clear and open fashion is the way we should witness. This is the way the early Christians did and it is the Biblical way to proclaim Christ. We are called upon to declare “the gospel of Christ” (Rom. 1:16) – not a gospel of an X. Let’s stop hiding behind acronyms and other religious customs and preach Christ. God has never been impressed with pictorial representations and manmade pictures or acrostics designed to represent His Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In today’s modern culture the expression “Xmas” does not draw us to Christ. It actually detracts from Christ by not bringing His name out into the open and declaring His purpose for coming into the world.

My wife and I walk every morning. In one of the places where we walk there is a memorial to the military. Someone decided to put one of those blue bathrooms right beside the monument. The public left the city know that a blue portable porta potty beside this important monument was belittling and disrespectful to the military. In a similar way, I believe that using an abbreviated “X” in the place of Christ in our present-day culture is also disrespectful despite the historic meaning that is behind it. We are called to preach Christ (Col. 1:23), put on Christ (Rom. 13:14), and sing about Christ (Eph. 5:19) – not abbreviate Him and His name! Christianity is Christ – not an X! Let’s say it and live it!

The early Christians and Biblical pattern informs us that we should stop abbreviating Christ and make His name clearly known to a secularized and godless society in which we live. We should stop playing into the hands of the secular progressives today by trying to maintain an ancient custom that has no real significance today. Instead of following customs and manmade acrostics which have no bearing on the truth, we should follow the Scriptures

and spell out the name of “Christ” and be thankful “that **Christ** Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15).

My Savior is Christ. I am a follower of Christ. I preach and declare Christ to others. He is not an “X” to me (Gal. 2:20) or to those I share Christ with. He is the “Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 16:31) that every person must believe on in order to be saved. Let’s keep the name of Christ out in the open and not hide it behind ancient abbreviations, customs, but openly declare it to a wicked and perverse generation (Phil. 2:15). People need to know about Christ – not an X. They need to believe on Christ – not an X. Christians need to declare Christ to the lost – not an X. The name of Christ should be upon our lips – not an X. The Christmas season is about Christ – not an X.

And now I must close this study. May I say to you today...



Merry Christmas

The text "Merry Christmas" is written in a red, cursive font. The word "Merry" is on the top line, and "Christmas" is on the bottom line. There are two holly leaves with red berries: one is positioned between the 'y' of "Merry" and the 'C' of "Christmas", and the other is positioned below the 'M' of "Merry".