

## Bible Sermons

# WAS JESUS CHRIST BORN ON DECEMBER 25TH?

DECEMBER 9, 2014 | ROBSTEACHINGS | 1 COMMENT



*Christmas Bells*

I love Christmas. It is one of my favorite holidays. Living in the Northwest United States I always look forward to the weather turning colder, snow blanketing the ground, and bundling up in warm clothes. Many of us prepare for family gatherings, office parties, and strolls around town to look at all the beautiful lights & decorations. It is a holiday with deep roots in our families and churches that go back farther than any of us can remember.

As many people who celebrate Christmas know, there are many traditions that we incorporate into the holiday season. It is a tradition to give neatly wrapped presents to one another to show our appreciation and to bless the person receiving the gift. Charities and food banks encourage people to give of their abundance in order to help out those less fortunate. Children sit on Santa's lap and tell him what gifts they would like. Couples give each other kisses under the mistletoe. Santa Claus and his reindeer show up at the mall. We cut down pine trees (or more recently buy plastic trees) and decorate them with lights and ornaments in our homes. We see nativity scenes portraying the newborn Jesus Christ in a manger. Joseph & Mary, The Three Wise Men, the Shepherds, and their sheep are all gathered around. A single radiant star hangs overhead in the sky. I often wonder what it would have been like to be there during this time. To see Christ the redeemer, the savior of man, the only begotten Son of God would have been amazing.

As I grew up and learned more about God and His Word I began to wonder how we got some of these long-standing traditions and realized that some of them seemed to be noticeably different from what the Bible says – and in many cases, absent altogether. My purpose for sharing this information is not to be confrontational. Instead I wish to share the truth about Christ and his birth from the Bible and you can feel free to make your own conclusions on the subject. I recommend that you have a Bible ready so you can look up all of the scriptures that I reference to solidify them in your own mind.

Let's start by setting the framework for this research topic. God instructs each of us (not just our pastors) to study the Bible to show ourselves approved as workmen of the Word. (II Timothy 2:15) He

tells us to let the Bible speak for itself by rightly dividing it rather than privately interpreting it and making our own assumptions or guessing (II Peter 1:20-21) We are instructed that the scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35) and that we are to teach the scripture with authority and conviction (Titus 2:15) and with humility (II Timothy 2:24-25)\*

With these principles in mind, let's look at the birth of Jesus Christ. Tradition tells us that December 25th is the date when he was born. Looking at it from a cultural standpoint we have no reason to doubt this, but looking from a biblical standpoint there are a few discrepancies with this tradition.

According to books on Eastern customs, sheep were not put to pasture after October because it was too cold. But **Luke 2:15-16** shows the record of shepherds in the fields who came and saw the newborn child Jesus: “..the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” So either the Shepherds were tending their sheep much too late in the season, or Jesus was born some time earlier than December. We will get into this more later.

Why do we teach that there were three Wise Men (or Magi, pronounced maj-eye) when the Bible does not specify how many? **Matthew 2:1** – “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem” Most likely they traveled in a large caravan for safety and normally travel was done in the spring, summer, or fall months. I think because there were three gifts given, (Matthew 2:11) perhaps that is why we show three Wise Men but the Bible does not say the number of Magi who were there.

Next, we show Shepherds and Wise Men together in nativity scenes today. Would they have arrived at the same time? In **Luke 2:16** we read about the shepherds: “And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.” The Shepherds clearly found a child who had just been born. Note that they found the child in a “manger” as this is significant. There is no record of Wise Men yet. They came much later.

**Matthew 2:11** says of the Wise Men: “And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother..” Let's take careful note of what they found. They were in a house, not a manger or stable. And why would they have found a “young child” rather than a “babe” if he were just born? The answer is that the words of the Bible are exact and Jesus was a young child at this time. It was a significant amount of time later, in fact more than a year and three months had passed when the Wise Men arrived. How do we know this?

In the book of Matthew, it is recorded how Herod commanded all of the children 2 years old and younger in Bethlehem to be killed after learning of Jesus' birth. (Matthew 2:16) Why would he have done this if Christ were still a baby when the Wise Men came to honor him with gifts and pay homage to

the Messiah? The answer is that Herod knew he would have been over a year old but less than two at this time. The Wise Men, or Magi learned of Herod's plans and did not return to him but rather returned to their own country after seeing the young child and bringing him royal gifts of gold, frankincense, & myrrh. (Matthew 2:7-16)

Herod's intent was to destroy what he saw as a threat to his throne, Christ the King. Herod was not aware that although Jesus came from the lineage of David and had royal blood, he came not to overthrow a political kingdom, but to redeem mankind from their sins and make available eternal life for the believer – which is a spiritual kingdom. (Romans 10:9-10)

To find the month and year that Christ was born we can look at what we know about the time:

-King Herod was alive at the time he was born.

-The historian Josephus recorded a lunar eclipse shortly before Herod's death

-Herod's death occurred sometime between 7 B.C. and 1 B.C.

-There were four observable eclipses during this time:

- March 23rd, 5 BC.
- September 15th, 5 B.C.
- March 13th, 4 B.C.
- January 9th, 1 B.C.

The eclipse recorded by Josephus notes that Herod died before the feast of the Passover the following month. The only time in which these events could have been possible was during the January 9th, 1 B.C. eclipse.\*\* This tells us that Jesus was not born in the year 1 A.D. but rather sometime in the B.C. era. We will get more specific as we research this further. First, let me elaborate on the biblical significance of the stars and planets.

God originally "wrote" his Word in the stars. **Psalm 147:4-5** says "He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite."

**Genesis 1:14-15** states: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so."

We easily understand what is meant by "seasons and for days, and years" but what about "let them be for signs" do we know what that means? These signs refer to the 12 constellations which were set up by

God as symbols for his people of things present and things to come.

Constellations were established to help people remember each record of history that was recorded in the stars. This was how God wrote his Word before it was written in a book as we know it today. (II Timothy 3:16) These Old Testament believers would have studied these celestial events closely and taught this information to their children thus passing it on to the next generation. The Magi were especially versed in these celestial studies which is why they were consulted by King Herod. The twelve constellations were not meant to be a way to attempt to predict our future, as the pretended art of Astrology would have us believe. (Isaiah 47:12-14) Rather, via the science of Astronomy the constellations are to record the history of the past and tell of the future events as God has planned them. In fact, some events that are written in the stars regarding Jesus Christ are still future and have not yet come to pass. (Revelation 21:4-5)

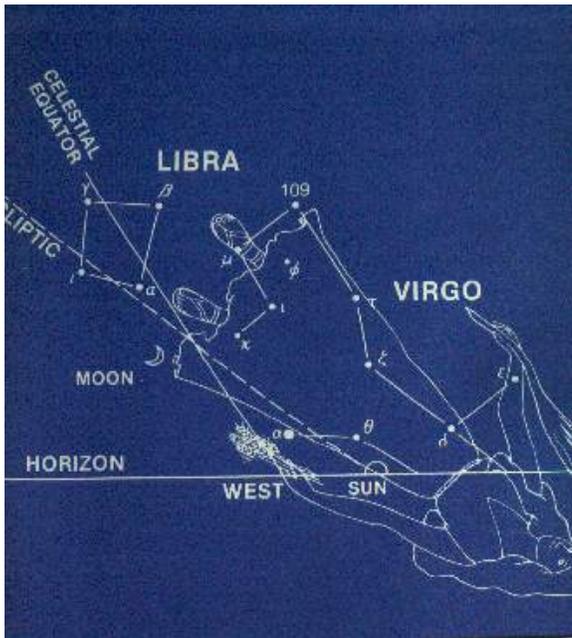
Now, back to when he was born. At least 16 early Christian sources show that Jesus was born after the year 4 B.C. and the majority of them pinpoint his birth late in the year 3 B.C. Astronomical research backs this up. The movements of the planets and the stars can be calculated very precisely using computers and mathematical algorithms today. The reason that the Magi were able to notice these celestial events is that they were very remarkable during the time leading up to the birth of Christ. The constellation Leo represents royalty, and during this time there was "...very noticeable celestial activity of Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Regulus (the King star), and Venus (the Queen star), and their various combinations of conjunctions in Leo during the nine months leading up to Christ's birth"\*\*\*

The written Bible lines up perfectly with the Word written in the stars in telling of these past and future events such as those recorded in **Revelation 12:1-5** "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."

Let's take some time to break down these verses and explain what all of that means.

"A great wonder in heaven" – is a very significant celestial event and this was what the Magi saw in the stars. It announced the birth of the King, Jesus Christ.

"A woman clothed with the Sun and the moon under her feet" -refers to the constellation Virgo. (See image) and how the moon was set in the same part of the sky at this time. Virgo represents Mary, the woman who gave birth to the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ.



Constellation Virgo clothed with the Sun

“..clothed with the Sun” – there is only a 21 day period within which the Sun could be seen within the constellation Virgo as it set in the West. In the year 3 B.C. the sun would have been visible within Virgo between August 27th and September 15th. We can narrow down the time of year he was born to this 21 day period. However, there was only *one* day where the sun and the moon would have both been visible with Virgo. That day was Wednesday, September 11th, 3 B.C. And to be more specific, this celestial event would have only been visible during an 81 minute period in the evening between sunset at 6:18 PM and moonset at 7:39 PM. This is the exact year, month, day, and hour that he was born. Now let’s continue with the rest of the scripture.

“and upon her head a crown of twelve stars” – Numbers are significant in the bible. According to the book *Number in Scripture*, “Twelve is a perfect number, signifying perfection of government, or of governmental perfection. It is found as a multiple in all that has to do with rule. The Sun which “rules” the day and the moon and stars which “govern” the night, do so by their passage through the twelve signs of the Zodiac which completes the great circle of the heavens... Twelve is the product of 3 (The perfectly Divine and heavenly number) and 4 (the earthly, the number of what is material and organic).” \*\*\*\*

To simplify this definition, the crown of twelve stars in Virgo is telling of the “rule” of Jesus Christ as the King (the number 12) It signifies his heavenly throne as the Son of God (the number 3) as well as his earthly rule as a man who walked the earth (the number 4) See scriptures: Romans 1:4, I John 4:15, & I Timothy 2:5

“And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.” – This refers to the birth of Jesus Christ.

“and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. ” – here we see more numbers used to describe the great red dragon, Lucifer. He was originally one of God’s three Archangels. The numbers 7 and 10 mean “spiritual perfection” and “divine order” respectively. Lucifer was spiritually perfect and divinely made until he chose to rebel against God by his own free will (Isaiah 14:12-14)

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth” – This refers to the fall of Lucifer where he took 1/3 of the Angels to earth with him, they are known as “devil spirits” or “evil spirits” today and are the source of spiritual wickedness in our world. (Revelation 12:9, Mark 1:34)

“and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. ” – Satan orchestrated an attempt by Herod to execute Jesus Christ shortly after he was born. This attempted execution was foretold in the stars and also told to Mary and Joseph by God so they could flee the country and Jesus would be safe. (Matthew 2:12-14)

“And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.” – Mary did bring forth Jesus who would eventually be crucified, buried, and resurrected 3 days later and seated at the right hand of God, the throne of exaltation. (Hebrews 10:12, I Peter 3:22)

It is fascinating to see just how detailed God is when he recorded the birth of His son, Jesus Christ. Throughout the ages he has always made this known for his people.

**Jesus Christ was born on Wednesday, September 11th, 3 B.C.** between the hours of 6:18 PM and 7:39 PM Palestine time. This clear biblical and scientific evidence shows when the fulcrum of history came into this world.

It is comforting to know that God gave us eternal life through Jesus Christ and that all who believe in him will be saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

In **John 10:10** – Jesus Christ said: “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

God’s desire for us is to have life more abundantly.

**Merry Christmas and God Bless You.**

### References:

\* Paraphrased from the book Jesus Christ our Passover  
Preface page XIII, 1980-1995 American Christian Press

\*\* Jesus Christ our Promised Seed Chapter 3, Page 27-28  
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\*\*\* Truth or Tradition – 2010 (2014) – Spirit & Truth Fellowship International.  
Updated link 12/2014 <http://www.truthortradition.com/articles/why-was-jesus-christs-birthday-celebrated-on-december-25th>

\*\*\*\* Number in Scripture – E.W. Bullinger, Published 1967, Pages 159, 243, 253

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