

**The Birth of Jesus**  
**“The Truth As We Know It”**  
**9/20/15 V B 4**

This week I want to follow up on my talk from last week and begin my attempt to show from scripture when Jesus was born. The common understanding is that Jesus was born on Christmas day. I remember singing songs like the song 'O little town of Bethlehem' "We hear the Christmas Angels, The great glad tidings tell" A lovely, beautiful song, but teaching something that is demonstrably not true. I will attempt to show that He was born in the Fall at the Feast of Tabernacles in late September or early October.

Let us look at some of the obvious, common sense, principles that we can look at to tell us that Jesus could not have been born in the middle of winter or on December 25. The first and obvious clue is that the shepherds were still in the fields watching their flocks as is told in that beautiful story in Luke 2:8-14 and we read, "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The sheep are brought to shelter as the fall sets in, in Israel just as in any other cold weather country in the northern hemisphere. The fall rains begin in late October and continue through the winter which is taught in Ezra 10:9 where we read, "Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem... It was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month; and all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain." The ninth month in the Jewish calendar corresponds to our December. So the shepherds would not have been in the fields on Christmas day.

We know that Jesus was Crucified at the Feast of Passover in April, or what is commonly called the Easter time. We also know that His ministry began when He was thirty years old and lasted three & one half years. He was

thirty three and one half years old when He was crucified. If you count six months from April, you arrive at October. So He was born in October.

This is established in Luke 3:22-23 where we read, "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age,.." So we know he was thirty years old when He began His ministry. And we know he was crucified on Passover day as is shown in Mat 26:1-2 where we read, .."When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the Passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

Also, for the more serious Bible student, you can establish the time of His birth from the Priest named Zacharias who was John, the Baptist's father. We know that John, the Baptist, was six months older than Jesus from the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary. This story is told in Luke 1:26-27 where we read, "In the sixth month (of Elizabeth's pregnancy) the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary." So Jesus was six months younger than John, the Baptist.

Zacharias, the priest, was of the course of Abia, as we learn in Luke 1:5 quoting, "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth." The course of Abia gives us a calendar date of Zacharias' service in the Temple. That course is established as the eighth course of the Jewish civil calendar year. We find that in I Chron. 24:7-19 where the twenty four courses of service were set by King Solomon. Each course ministered for one week twice a year, with the first course starting at the beginning of the Jewish civil New Year, Tishri. The reason for the ministration's beginning at the start of the civil year rather than at the first of the religious year (Abib, March-April) is the fact that the delineation of the priestly courses began with Solomon's dedication of the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles. Tishri corresponds to the second two weeks of September and the first two weeks of October on the Gregorian calendar and is noted as September-October.

The time of his second biannual ministrations was at the end of the month Zif, which corresponds to April-May. Zacharias was ministering before the Lord during the middle of May when the angel of the Lord appeared to him and declared to him, "Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John". After his ministrations in the temple, Zacharias returned to his home. His barren and aged wife Elisabeth conceived miraculously. Her conception took place in early June, and she subsequently hid herself for five months.

At this time the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph, and announced to her: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren"

It was during the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy that Mary was overshadowed of the Holy Spirit and conceived Jesus. Since Elisabeth had conceived in early June, her sixth month of pregnancy and the time of Jesus' conception would have been in early December. An average gestation period of forty weeks or two hundred and eighty days would have had Jesus born in early October or around the third week of the month of Tishri, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Placing the time of the nativity at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Since the Feast of Tabernacles was the time of ingathering, it would have been the most natural time of the year for the Roman government to impose taxation on the people of Israel. Autumn would also have been a time when Mary could have undertaken the 90 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Such a journey in her condition would have been virtually impossible during winter.

Should we as Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus at all? Yes, most certainly! God sent the angels to announce His birth to the shepherds in the fields! He sent a host of angels to sing what must have been the most beautiful music ever heard! God aligned the stars at Creation to be just right so that the wise men in the east would see them and know a King had been

born in Israel! Think of it! That is absolutely awesome! If God went to such great effort to announce His birth, we surely need to celebrate it. But is He honored when we celebrate in a time that can be shown to be a time of Idolatry? I think not! We need to honor Him at the Feast of Tabernacles. More on this in future broadcasts.

Listen again next week.

This we do know, The Bible is God's Word, God's word is true, Jesus Christ is God's son, Jesus died to save us from our sin, Without Jesus we are eternally lost. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we might be saved. Atheism is a temporary condition, for every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! Jesus stands ready to save you now, Will you call on Him today?

Until next week, God bless.