

Is December 25th Jesus' Birthday?

Biblical scholars readily tell us that it was most likely NOT on December 25th, A.D. 0. Why?

Is there any evidence from the Bible that will help us fix the date and year of Christ's birth?

Actually from the Bible, we can at least determine the probable season and year of His birth. The most convincing proof of when Jesus was born comes in understanding the evidence that is presented in the book of Luke concerning the birth of John the Baptist.

The New American Standard Bible

Luke 1

1:5

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

1:6

They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

1:7

But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

1:8

Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

1:9

according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

1:10

And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

1:11

And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

1:12

Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.

1:13

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

1:14

"You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

1:15

"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

1:16

"And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

1:17

"It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah was of the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5,8). Back in King David's day, the priests had been separated into 24 turns or divisions. These turns began in the first month of the Jewish calendar (1 Chronicles 27:2), March or April of our modern calendar. According to many sources, the turns rotated every week until they reached the end of the sixth month, when the cycle was repeated again until the end of the year. This would mean that Zechariah's division served at the temple twice a year.

We find in 1 Chronicles 24:10 that Abijah was the eighth division of the priesthood. Thus, Zechariah's service would be in the tenth week of the calendar. Why the tenth week? Because all divisions served during primary feast weeks of God's Holy Days. So all of the divisions of the priesthood would serve during *Passover* and the *Days of Unleavened Bread* (the third week of the year). Likewise, all

of the divisions of the priesthood would serve during the *Feast of Weeks* or Pentecost (the ninth week). Thus, the eighth course of the priesthood would end up serving on the tenth week of the year.

The New American Standard Bible

Luke 1

- 1:23** When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home.
- 1:24** After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept [1:23](#) herself in seclusion for five months, saying,
- 1:25** "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take [1:24](#) away my disgrace among men."

A normal pregnancy could place the birth of John the Baptist at the time of the *Passover* / 1st Day of Unleavened Bread. As a tradition, Jews always looked for Elijah to return on the day of *Passover*. In Judaism, even in modern times there is an empty chair and a table setting for Elijah when most Jewish *Passovers* are celebrated. The Old Testament prophets had said that God would send Elijah before the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). According to these calculations John the Baptist would have been born at the time of *Passover* / 1st Day of Unleavened Bread. Remember the angel's words to Zechariah? The angel said that John the Baptist was to come "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17).

The New American Standard Bible

Luke 1

- 1:26** Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,
- 1:27** to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
- 1:28** And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."
- 1:29** But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.
- 1:30** The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.
- 1:31** "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.
- 1:32** "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;
- 1:33** and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."
- 1:34** Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"
- 1:35** The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.
- 1:36** "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

Luke tells us that Elizabeth was six months pregnant when the angel Gabriel visited Mary. Assuming a normal pregnancy of 285 days, Jesus would have been born at the time of the 15th day of *Tishri* (late September / early October on the current calendar). This is significant because it is the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkot*). It is a high day, a special Sabbath, a time of great rejoicing. It is more reasonable to consider that Jesus' physical birth occurred in the autumn of the year on the first day of the Feast of

Tabernacles, than on December 25. There are some very interesting connections in Scripture with Jesus and aspects of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The New American Standard Bible

John 1

1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Greek word used for “dwelt” means “tabernacled”, which means to live temporarily (*“And the Word became flesh and **tabernacled** among us..”* [literal translation of the Greek]).

While the Bible does not state the actual date of Jesus’ physical birth, there is strong evidence from Luke 1 and 1 Chronicles 24 to support that the fact that His physical birth did not occur on December 25th.

Best Guess: Jesus’ physical birth was in last September or early October, 5 B.C.