

The Truth About Christmas

For many people, the Christmas season is their favourite time of the year. They love music and traveling and being with relatives. They love the aromas and the decorations and the singing and the Christmas dinner. Children love being out-of-school and opening presents, and it's a time filled with emotion, and for many people it's like the song says, "The most wonderful time of the year." But, for other people, it's a difficult time of the year. It's a time that they feel particularly lonely. You know, for those who have lost loved ones, it's a really hard time, because it's a time they're used to being together, and they remember Christmases from years gone by, and it makes it particularly hard for them.

However, for many Christians it can be a very confusing time, because they see signs that say, "Jesus is the reason for the season," but they know they can't find that in their Bibles. And they see plays talking about the birth of Christ, and they're not sure what's appropriate and what's not; they want to enjoy the holiday, but they don't want to do anything that's not right. And so, it can be very disconcerting. Today we're going to deal with some of these issues and look at some misconceptions about Christmas.

So first, let's talk about some misconceptions about the birth of Jesus, because there are actually a lot of these. Some of these you may be familiar with and perhaps some of these you are not. But the story of Jesus' birth is usually told something like this:

About two thousand years ago, on the evening of December 25th, Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey that Joseph, her husband, was leading. They urgently need to find shelter to deliver her baby. But although it's an emergency, all the innkeepers turn them away, and so they deliver the baby Jesus in a stable. Then the angels sing to the shepherds, and afterward three kings arrive on three camels, and they worship the quiet, peaceful newborn baby.

Now, the only problem with this story is that it's almost entirely wrong. You see the story of the birth of Jesus has been told and retold so many times in plays, poetry, books, movies and Christmas cards that people have a very distorted view of the true events.

Of course, the only accurate account of what happened is found in the Bible, and so this is where we will go to examine some of the misconceptions and see what the Bible actually has to say. Some of these details are important, others are not so important, but the point is, is that we need to see that all too often what people believe is not based on what the Bible actually says but on what they have always been told. And so, to clarify what the Bible actually says, we need to go there, and we will start with Luke chapter 2. And here is the first misconception about the birth of Jesus.

The story says that Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey. Well, here's what the Bible actually says, Luke chapter 2 and verse 3.

[1]And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. [2] (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) [3] And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. [4] And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) [5] To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. Luke 2:1-5 KJV

Now that's all it says. We did not read anything about a donkey. Now it's possible that she rode on a donkey, but the Bible doesn't say that. It could have been a camel. There are various possibilities of what it could be but it's interesting what the Bible actually says and what people think the Bible says. And sometimes, if people would take the time to look, they'd be quite surprised.

Another misconception is that Jesus was born the same night that Mary arrived in Bethlehem. Again, the Bible doesn't say that. This is part of the story that's traditionally told, but in reality, they might have arrived weeks earlier. The Bible simply says, in Luke chapter 2 and verse 6.

[6] And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. Luke 2:6 KJV

That's all the Bible says, which does not agree well with the traditional story. Then there is another false idea that a hotel keeper, an innkeeper, told Mary and Joseph that there was no room for them in the inn? Well, the truth is the Bible doesn't even mention an innkeeper.

I know that almost all denominational Christmas plays include one, but it's not in the Bible. In fact, it's more likely that Mary and Joseph would have stayed with relatives, not in some sort of Bible times hotel. Now, you might be thinking well doesn't Luke chapter 2 and verse 7 say:

[7] ..... because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 KJV

We will look at this a bit more shortly, but onto the next point.

The next thing we will look at is, was Jesus born in a stable? Well, would you be surprised to learn the Bible does not say that? You might say, "Well then, where do people get that idea?" Here's what the Bible actually says and this is the only place in the Bible that addresses this subject.

[7] And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 KJV

The Bible doesn't mention a stable. It simply says that they laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. Now, the word in the original language that's translated as inn is the word Kat-a-lu-ma. The word means a guest chamber. It can mean a lodging place or an inn. Many translators have chosen to translate this as inn, and so we have a certain picture that is painted in our minds.

But this same Greek word appears two other times in the Bible, once in Mark 14:14 and once in Luke 22 and verse 11. But in both those times it is translated as guest room and, according to Bible archaeology experts, Jesus was probably born in the house of relatives but probably somewhere outside the normal living quarters outside the house in guest chambers. The Bible in basic English says

there was no room for them in the house. And we also find in Bible times, particularly in ancient Israel, domestic animals did not always sleep outside; they frequently slept inside the house with the family, hence the manger.

Young's Literal Translation says there was not "for them a place in the guest chamber." And so, what tradition has told us simply does not match what the Bible actually says.

From the guest chamber we go the manger, and again it goes to show how people perpetuate myths about the Bible. The song "Away in a Manger". The song says, "The Baby awakes, but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes." Now I don't know what to say about that except, the Bible does not say it. It's a pretty song but the baby might have been screaming at the top of his lungs. We simply don't know. It's just something that we've inserted into the story.

Now we will look at the three kings. Did three kings riding camels actually come to the birthplace of Jesus? Well, in actuality the Bible doesn't say that any kings or camels came to visit the baby Jesus at the time of His birth. It does say that wise men came, but first, it doesn't say that there were three of them (we don't know how many), and secondly, the word for wise men in the original languages is plural, so we do know that there were at least two, but that's all that we know. There's even a tradition that gives the names of wise men, but that too, is totally without biblical evidence. What the Bible does say is that they bought with them three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Now, was Jesus really born on 25th December or was he born in the month of December at all? Well, although it's not impossible, it's highly unlikely. First, the Bible doesn't tell us when Jesus was born. Luke chapter 2 in verse 11 says: *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."* The Bible does not give a specific date, and the biblical evidence points to a time other than December. The fact that the shepherds were in the field would indicate that it was probably not December, because December is cold in Judea, it's rainy, and it would have been unlikely that the shepherds would have been in the fields. Also, Jesus' parents were going to Bethlehem for the Roman census and this is not the time of the year when they would normally take a census, because it was difficult to travel, the winter weather would cause icy roads and difficult conditions, and it wasn't practical. It would have been self-defeating.

So, the question is: When was Jesus born? Can we speculate about the time? I think we have a very good clue in Luke chapter 1. Jesus was 6 months younger than John the Baptist, who was a relative of Jesus, and so, if we can determine when John was born, then, we can get an idea about the birth of Jesus. In Luke chapter 1, verse 5, it says, *"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abi*a: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth." Now, make note of that.

Now, Zachariah is on the 8th course, the course of Abia, and he will serve on the 9th week. So, if you start with the first month, the Hebrew month of Nissan, which corresponds to our month of March almost exactly, then he would serve in May, maybe early May, and he would serve for one week. Now watch this carefully, verse 23: *"And it came to pass", "that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived..."* Now, the course of the priest begins in the month of March, the 8th course, which will be the 9th week, which puts Zacharias serving in May. As soon as he leaves serving, he goes home and his wife conceives, and she's carrying John the Baptist.

Jesus was conceived six months later from that, which would put his conception in about November. And then, Mary, his mother, carried the Christ child for nine months. Now that would place his birth sometime around the month of September and would explain why the shepherds were out in the fields caring for their sheep, the weather was still warm, and it was the time of the annual Feast of Tabernacles. And so, the indicators would say that it's more likely that Jesus was born in September or maybe early October. And so, there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding the birth of Jesus and tradition is very different from what the Bible actually says.

Now, let's look at some misconceptions about the meaning of Christmas. Of course, one of the greatest misconceptions about Christmas is that it is a holy day. And for some people, it's one of two days in the year when they will actually set foot in a church building. But the Bible doesn't attach any religious significance whatsoever to Christmas. A denominational church building poster read that "Joseph and Mary received the first Christmas present." But you know, the fact is, Joseph and Mary had never heard of Christmas.

The word Christmas doesn't appear anywhere in the Bible and the concept did not arise until a long time after the Bible had been completed. If you look back at history, what you find is that before Jesus came to this Earth, there were

people who were doing mid-winter festivals. The Mesopotamians, for example, had a 12-day celebration in which they gave gifts to one another, and they had feasting and friends would get together, and it had a connection to their pagan gods. And these feasts and celebrations would honour these pagan gods.

Compton's Encyclopaedia goes on to say that other nationalities also did this. The Romans did it, the Egyptians did it. And this was before the birth of Christ.

Christmas was never observed by the early church. Christmas was first formally recorded and celebrated on December 25th, 336 AD in Rome, during the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine. It had nothing to do with the actual birthday of Jesus; it had to do with creating a holiday to give another outlet to pagan festivities. It was not a holy day, and it did not come from God but from the adversary of God.

Long before Jesus was born, Satan was laying the foundation for every system of falsehood and error the world has ever known.[25] *They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.* Romans 1:25 NLT

Here is a truth that should be deeply impressed upon your minds today: Paganism is devil worship. Let us never forget that this system of religion, while professing to be the true religion, is actually devil worship. It professes and claims to be the Truth of God. In reality, it is Satan's masterpiece, the "*mystery of iniquity.*" 2 Thessalonians 2:7

Every year, when the cold season began, the people believed their sun god was leaving them. They came to learn that his lowest dip on the horizon, about December 21st, was followed by his gradual return, until in midsummer, he was directly overhead at noonday. It was on the 25th of December that they began to notice this gradual return of the sun god. This day they called the birthday of the sun. Thus, the winter solstice came to be regarded as a time of great importance; and at the festival inaugurated, there was feasting and merriment in honour of the return of the all-powerful sun god.

It was their belief in the annual journey of their god that Elijah alluded to in his conflict with the priests of Baal, the Syro-Phoenician sun god.

[27] *And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened."* 1 Kings 18:27 NKJV

Tammuz was hailed as the son of the sun. He was idolized and even worshipped. The first letter of his name became, in time, the symbol of sun worship. Human sacrifices to the sun god were offered on this initial letter made of wood, known as the cross "T." and His birthday, December 25th, was honoured more and more. When Tammuz died, the pagans instituted forty days of weeping for him before the full moon, following the vernal equinox.

Think of it. Satan worked many years before the conception and birth of the true Messiah, Jesus, to counterfeit through sun worship His miraculous conception and birth. Let's read about this very thing in the Bible. Perhaps some of you never knew that the Bible mentions these things.

12 Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land.' " 13 And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing." 14 So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for [a]Tammuz. 15 Then He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." 16 So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the Lord and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east. 17 And He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. 18 Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them." Ezekiel 8:12-18 NKJV

God's people were constantly coming in contact with paganism, which was nothing more or less than sun worship. They were constantly being tempted to follow the religion of the pagans instead of the Bible. Satan succeeded many times in leading God's people into sin and pagan sun worship. The prophet was shown greater and still greater abominations. He was shown that the people were turning their backs on the temple of God and worshipping the sun toward the east.

They also worshipped the moon goddess, Semiramis, the so-called queen of heaven. Let's read what they did, in the book of Jeremiah.

16 "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you. 17 Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. Jeremiah 7:16-18 NKJV

These cakes were round and on them was cut a cross in honour of the sun god, and they were offered to the queen of heaven. Today they are called hot cross buns.

Let us notice now a few striking and outstanding things that took place; and keep in mind that the devil, who is really the author of pagan sun worship, had been working for centuries to get this false worship so implanted in the world that God's true plan of salvation through Jesus Christ would be insulted and, if possible, be made a failure.

The exact date of Christ's birthday was not known; and so, it was suggested, why not call it the same date as the birth of Tammuz, which was December 25th. That, too, was the time when the sun had reached its lowest point on the horizon and started back up into the heavens. The sun god had come to life, so to speak. Thus, gradually but surely, December 25th came to be known as the birthday of Christ. The papal church finally instituted a special mass on that day, "Christ's Mass," and so December 25th became "Christmas." The yule log burning in the fire, followed by the green tree lighted with candles, all came from pagan worship, representing Nimrod's being dead, while his spirit still lived in the sun, and was alive again in Tammuz, his son.

Life was difficult at best during the early years of the Christian church. The pagan world was ruthless and powerful, and it sought to stamp out the little sect of worshipers who revered Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. But the blood of the martyrs proved to be the seed of the church, and as time passed it became clear that Christianity would prevail.

The earliest Christians had denied all compromise with false doctrine and had gladly suffered horrible martyrdoms for refusing even to place a pinch of incense at the feet of pagan altars. Yet in just a few generations of time, a curtain of

moral blackness shrouded the church. Ever anxious to assimilate and conquer, she integrated virtually every feature of sun worship into her own rites.

As stated earlier, Christmas was never observed by the early church. Christmas was first formally recorded and celebrated on December 25th, 336 AD in Rome, during the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine. However, paganism continues today.

If you have watched our videos, then you will know that Papal Rome is just a continuation of Pagan Rome and if you are unfamiliar with our website, you will find this in our videos below which the link will take you to.

Daniel and Revelation

All Roads Lead to Rome

The Reformation is Far From Over

The Mark of the Beast

Revelation 13

Heads – Horns and Crowns

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLsvzXAVKm98

We have also put a document that speaks of these things separately that you can read or go to their website to show you just what is behind the celebration of the Christmas Mass. There is much more we could go into on this subject, but this is just a short overview of where all these things that we see around us today come from.

We must recognise a parallel in what took place in church history and what is taking place in this day and age. Today's Christmas is all about a dazzling array of toys and stories about Santa. Maybe when we look at all these things we need to ask just one question – but where is the baby Jesus?