

Christmas & the Christian
Luke 2:1-15
By Russell Earl

Thesis: I want to show what the Bible says about the day of “Christmas” and how the Christian should view December 25th.

- Intro:
1. ***Much (but not all) of the material presented in this lesson is taken from the material presented and researched by Bro. Don Blackwell from WVBS.***
 2. Much has been said about the day “Christmas” and the date of December 25th.
 3. The questions we want to know the answer to is what does the Bible say about it and how should the New Testament Christian treat this day.

I. Misconceptions about the birth of Christ

A. The common story VS the Bible account.

1. 2000 years ago on Dec 25th Mary rode a donkey to Bethlehem to deliver Jesus. There is no room in the inn so Christ is born in a manger. Afterwards 3 kings arrive on 3 camels and they worship the quiet, peaceful baby Jesus.
Because of such stories people today have an unclear or distorted view of these events.
2. **Luke 2:3-5** – no donkeys are mentioned, what she rode to Bethlehem is not told.
3. Was Jesus born the same night that Mary arrived in Bethlehem?
 - a. The Bible does not say that. They could have arrived weeks or days earlier. The Bible says while there her “days were completed for her to be delivered.” (**Lk 2:6**)
4. Did an inn keeper tell Mary and Joseph there was no room for them? (**Lk 2:7**)
 - a. The Bible does not mention an “inn keeper”. In Bible times it was more likely that they would have stayed with relatives. The word “inn” in the Bible can be translated as: a guest chamber, a lodging place or an inn. Many translators have chosen to translate it as inn. The same Greek word appears two more times (**Mark 14:14 & Lk 22:11** – both times translated as “guest room”.) Evidence from archeology points to Christ more likely being born in a home with relatives; but outside of the house in the “guest chambers”. (Check also **Luke 2:7** “the Bible in basic English” & Young’s literal translation)
5. What time of the year was Christ born?
 - a. **Luke 2:11** – no specific date is given.
 - b. Biblical evidence would indicate that it could not be in December because the shepherds were still in the fields. The parents were going to Bethlehem for the census but December is not the time of year when a census was taken. Because of the difficulty of travel in the winter weather, poor road conditions would mean less people would travel for the census.
 - c. Christ was 6 months younger than John the Baptist (**Luke 1:5**). Zacharias of the course of Abia.
 - 8th course. Because of the feast day he would serve on the 9th week.
 - The month of Nisan is the first month of the Hebrew calendar which corresponds with our month of March.
 - Zacharias’ week of the temple service fell in the month of May.

- **Luke 1:23-24** – very soon after his service was over (in May) his wife became pregnant.

Timeline

March – the beginning of the Jewish calendar

May – Zacharias serves in the temple (**Lk 1:5**). After his service in the temple Zacharias and Elisabeth conceived (**Lk 1:23-24**).

November – Jesus is conceived (**Lk 1:31-36**)

August – 9 months later (from November) Jesus is possibly born sometime in August.

II. Misconceptions about the meaning of Christmas

A. The meaning of Christmas

1. The Bible doesn't attach any religious significance to Christmas. The Bible doesn't refer to it as a holiday or special day that we are to observe. Christmas doesn't appear in the Bible. The concept came long after the Bible had been completed.
2. Mesopotamians celebrated winter festivals before Christ. It had a connection to their pagan gods. Romans, Egyptians and the Chinese do similar things. What would later become the Roman Catholic Church started a special event in fear that their members would be drawn into the festivals held by others. Their alternative was Christmas and it was created to counter pagan festivals. It is not a holy day and did not come from God.

B. Another misconception of the meaning of Christmas

1. Another Misconception of the meaning of Christmas – is that Christ is “re-sacrificed” in the observance of the Lord's Supper. The word Christmas comes from two words “Christ” and “Mass”. The term refers to the gathering or mass of the Catholic Church, thus Christ-mass. A special mass of the Catholic Church when Jesus is re-sacrificed in observance of the Lord's Supper. This mass takes place in commemoration of the birth of Christ.
2. Christ is not re-sacrificed, only once for all (**Heb 9:28, 10:26**). We are told to celebrate – not the birth of Christ, but His death. This is done by partaking of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week every week-not once a year (**Acts 20:7**).

III. Christmas and the Christian (misconceptions about the celebration of Christmas)

A. Is it sinful to celebrate Christmas?

1. Is there anything wrong with getting together with family, giving and receiving gifts, singing songs unrelated to the birth of Christ, drinking hot chocolate, making gingerbread houses, etc? A star of Bethlehem on our tree or using a nativity scene would be different and would no doubt promote the worldly view of Christmas.

B. Some have argued that Christmas is of Catholic origin and to celebrate it perpetuates error and that the use of term Christmas would show our support of the worldly view of Christmas.

1. The word Christmas no longer refers to a specific Catholic mass but now refers to a holiday celebrated around the world celebrated by those of the church, and by those of the world and even by atheists. The word has taken on a different meaning and it would be inconsistent to reject a holiday based on the origin of the word.
2. a. Sunday - refers to the sacred day of the sun
b. Thursday – refers to the sacred day of the war god Thor

c. The same could be said about the name of our months and so on.
But for Christians these days do not represent days of pagan gods but are used to identify time.

- Conc: 1. Christmas – is NOT a religious holiday, is NOT the day of Christ’s birth, there is no command to celebrate it or to teach it as a Christian holiday.
2. If you believe it is wrong to use this day for family and friends then by all means do not treat it any differently from any other day. We are told not to offend our conscience if we believe something is wrong (*Rom 14*).
- a. Brother Don Blackwell has said, and I agree
- “Jesus is the Reason”
- For Salvation
- For the hope of heaven
- that life is worth living
- But Jesus is NOT the reason for the season.
3. Full Invitation