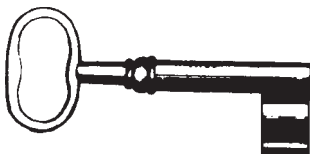


*Keys to Knowledge*

# **The Birth of the Messiah**

**On Which Day  
Was the Savior Born?**

*by*  
**Elder Jacob O. Meyer**



© Copyright 1971, 1985, and 2005  
*Assemblies of Yahweh*  
*All Rights Reserved*

# The Birth of the Messiah

## On Which Day Was the Savior Born?

*by*

**Elder Jacob O. Meyer**

It appears strange to note how many people are disillusioned each year while celebrating Christmas with the universal materialism which seems to dampen the Christmas spirit. Concerned ministers and Sunday School teachers frequently repeat the exhortation to restore the scriptural story of the Savior's birth to the Christmas observance. This urging goes largely unheeded, however, as the story of our Savior's birth is relegated to second position behind the more popular Santa Claus myth. It should be obvious to all who question the trend of the Christmas celebrations over recent years that nothing anyone can say, or do, will reverse the course of this materialistic observance. The people of our contemporary society seem to delight in celebrating these worldly annual holidays. It is only a relative few who are sufficiently diligent to investigate the facts which are pertinent to understanding the drift of society which has taken place (especially in recent years). If you have an open mind, let us carefully examine these facts to learn whether we really should observe the birthday of our Savior, as do most people, on December 25th each year.

In nominal Christianity we find that all of the doctrines and practices on which the average church member bases his worship appear to be traced to the Bible. Something is wrong, however, since we find that there is little agreement among various denominations on how the Bible message should be applied. In fact, some fundamentalist groups in existence today do not celebrate Christmas simply

because they cannot find it to be commanded in the Scriptures. These groups are few and far between, however, and their witness is almost completely inundated by the determined resistance of the majority of people against departing from inherited tradition.

At the outset of our study it is important that we establish biblical authority to observe birthdays, if we can. The traditional, popular observance of birthdays with the customary cake, candles, and gifts is associated closely with the Christmas observance. First, we should ask ourselves if such an observance is anywhere commanded in the Word. The answer, upon checking a good concordance, is obvious. Birthdays are mentioned only twice in the Bible, with a possible third occurrence which has been veiled under an awkward translation. None of these instances are connected to any biblical command to do so. Conversely, the evidence of what occurred on each of these occasions compels us to conclude that the birthday observance has a rather unpleasant, dubious reputation. On each of these recorded scriptural birthday occasions violent death occurred, as we may see from reading the context of each of the following passages: Genesis 40:20, Matthew 14:6, and Job 1:4 ("his day" in the Hebrew alludes to the birthday).

History reveals that ancient people celebrated birthdays with great pomp and ceremony, as is also recorded in the sacred Scriptures. However, Almighty Yahweh has actually legislated against the observance of birthdays. He has declared in Isaiah 65:11-12, "***But you that forsake Yahweh, that forget my holy mountain [His governmental rule], that prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine to Destiny [Hebrew is mene]; I will destine [Hebrew is manithi from the name of the deity meni] you to the sword, and you shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I called, you did not answer; when I spoke, you did not hear; but you did that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.***"

There was actually an ancient Assyrian Mighty One who was called *Manu* (*Mene*). He was worshiped with drink offerings on birthdays and other anniversaries. Undoubtedly, the worship of *Mene* was the occasion for the account in Daniel chapter 5, and the hand which wrote on the wall used an allusion to this worship to predict the end of Belshazzar's kingdom when it wrote, "***Mene,***

### ***Mene, Tekel, Upharsin.***

To summarize, we must conclude that there is no scriptural commandment to observe birthdays, but, in fact, it is displeasing to Almighty Yahweh when someone observes them. Incidentally, the usual cake and candles are also derived from pagan worship. Cakes or cookies were offered in worship to the "queen of heaven," Jeremiah 7:17-19. Candles appear to have been symbols of phallic worship and used on special occasions. The lamps of Yahweh's menorah were fueled with oil.

Was the birth date of our Savior actually on December 25? Your own Bible, and also history, reveals that it was not. When Yahshua the Messiah was born the shepherds were in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night, Luke 2:8. During the winter months in Palestine (the Land of Israel), the weather often becomes very severe. When the rainy season arrives, several weeks after the Feast of Tabernacles (generally in October or November), the flocks and herds are brought in for the night, since it would not be pleasant for shepherds or animals to sleep on the cold, wet ground. Actually, December 25th corresponds to the Feast of Dedication of John 10:22, which occurred in winter, a time when no shepherds would venture away from their homes and spend a night in the fields. The Apostle John tells us forthrightly that the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) is in winter.

A second fact, which should convince even the most skeptical person, is the taxation which took Joseph and Miriam to Bethlehem, Luke 2:1-5. Yahshua the Messiah was born only about 170 years after the War of the Maccabees. This era was a time of great patriotism among the Jews. They had defeated the determined efforts of Antiochus Epiphanes to Hellenize them. Their obstinate patriotism at about this same time forced the mighty Roman army to furl and lower its banners before entering Jerusalem. If Rome had ordered a tax census in the middle of winter, they would have been faced with a bitter insurrection and violent rebellion among their Jewish subjects. Simple logic will lead the thinking person to realize that such a tax census could best be conducted with the least amount of disturbance around one of their religious holidays, when people are on the move anyway to attend the rites of worship. In addition, the fall of the year, when the crops have just been harvested and the surplus sold, is when money would certainly be more plentiful to pay the taxes than it would be in the dead of winter.

Never realizing the importance of understanding the basics of Bible study which are to be found in the Old Testament, the average person reads over some of the most obvious clues which would indicate with certainty on which day our Savior was born. This day can be pinpointed with accuracy on the scriptural calendar and it occurs each year on this special day, although it will not be recognized on the Roman calendar which is in common use today.

In order to find the actual birth date of the Messiah, we must begin to read the chronology which is offered by Luke chapter 1. Our first and most important clue is to be found in verse 5. Zachariah, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest of the course of Abia (AbiYAH). This means that he was a member of the priestly family of Abiyah, a descendant of Aaron. When King David made his thorough preparations for the building of the temple, in addition to acquiring the building materials, he also arranged for the orderly conduct of the sacrificial and worship services in the completed sanctuary. He arranged to divide the labor among the designated people in the tribe of Levi. Among his assignments was the performance of the priestly duties which he divided among the 16 heads of the families of Eleazar, and the 8 heads of the families of Ithamar. This is recorded in 1 Chronicles 24. After the division of the priestly families had been completed, David selected, by lot, the one family who was to be in charge of the temple worship one week during the spring and summer months, and one week in the fall and winter months of the year. Consequently, the remaining priests were relieved of duty at all other times, with the exception of their commanded attendance at each one of the three major feasts of Yahweh—Passover and Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, when all males of Israel are obligated to appear, Exodus 23:15-17, etc. These are called the “pilgrim feasts” because, for most people, travel is involved. You may wish to read additional information which is offered by the historian Josephus in **Antiquities of the Jews**, Book 7, Chapter 14, Sec. 7, in which he describes how each division or course of priests began their service each Sabbath, and continued to serve for eight days until the end of the following Sabbath, when the next course or group had arrived. (Therefore, two groups were in the Temple to serve on each Sabbath day.)

Now that we have found a starting point, we may begin to count toward the birth date of our Savior. We must begin by counting the

week following the days of Unleavened Bread, beginning with the weekly Sabbath. Counting through 7 weeks, we reach the 8th week when the course of Abiyah served. Zachariah would have been serving with this group of priests, the family of AbiYah. If you are counting this with me on a scriptural calendar, you will find that Zachariah's ministering in Jerusalem would take place from around the 12th to the 19th day of the third scriptural month, called Sivan. This was the time when the angel of Yahweh predicted to Zachariah that he would become the father of a son and, as a sign of assurance, he would become dumb, unable to speak until after the child was born, Luke 1:8-22. After the time of his service was over, he returned to his own home in the hill country of Judah, Luke 1:39. Since he was aged we must allow several days travel for this trip and so, we can conclude, that the conception of John took place after the 21st of the month.

Now that we have established the time when John the Baptist was conceived, from this point of departure it will be easy to locate the birthday of the Messiah. Reading further in Luke chapter 1, we find that Elizabeth, John's mother, hid herself five months and, in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel made a visit to Miriam (rather than Mary), the mother of the Messiah, to announce His birth, Luke 1:24-38. Note again that this was the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Apparently, Miriam intended to stay three or four months with John's mother, most likely as a house-keeper during the latter part of Elizabeth's pregnancy and at the birth of the child, Luke 1:56. The virgin Miriam's remaining five or six months until the birth of Yahshua were spent in her own home in Nazareth.

Since it was in the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth when the birth of the Messiah was announced to Miriam, the begetting of the Messiah would have taken place just about exactly six months after the begetting of John. This would assign His begetting to about the first day of the month of Tebeth, or around December 10th to 20th of our Roman calendar. The normal gestation period of a human is 280 days, bringing the birth date of the Messiah to exactly the 15th day of the seventh scriptural month. Bible chronologists have set this date variously from September 28th to October 3rd on our Roman calendar. Regardless which day one may select on the Roman calendar, the day established on the scriptural calendar is the 15th day of

the seventh scriptural month, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Furthermore, the circumcision of Yahshua the Messiah would have occurred on the Last Great Day of the Feast, the eighth day.

Although I may be faced with the charge of working out this chronology on assumptions, the indicator which has been left by the Apostle John can hardly be called insignificant. It is found in John 1:14, where we read, "**And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled [the Greek word here is translated erroneously as dwelt] among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.**" John could have chosen different terms to present his thought had he wished to indicate "dwelt," so it certainly seems of uppermost significance that the word "tabernacled" was chosen, especially since the waymarkers lead us to this holy, commanded annual observance of Yahweh.

In Colossians 2:16 we learn that the Holy Days are shadows of things to come. Since a Hebrew baby was to be circumcised at the age of eight days, Genesis 17:9-14, this day of entering into the Covenant would correspond exactly to the Last Great Day of the Feast, John 7:37 and Leviticus 23:36. This Last Great Day is an extra special day on the scriptural calendar. It is called a solemn assembly in Numbers 29:35, leading to the definition of the Hebrew root *Awtzar* as *restraint*. It is the day when our Savior revealed that all men would have access to the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), when all men (who so desire) will be living in righteousness, the symbol of circumcision, Galatians 6:15 and Romans 2:25-29. The sacrificial law of the Feast of Tabernacles, as found in Numbers 29:12-34, reveals that diminishing sacrifices were offered each day of the Feast until, finally, on the Last Great Day, only minimal sacrifices were presented, revealing that when someone had reached that last day, he should have achieved a type of Spiritual perfection.

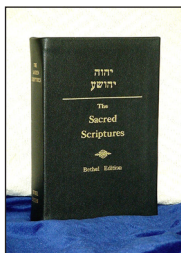
The question is often asked, "In which year was the Savior born?" History reveals that He must have been born earlier than 4 B.C.E., since this was the year that King Herod died. Various conclusions can be reached concerning which year His birth actually occurred, from 7 to 5 B.C.E. Again, allow me to reiterate that it is not imperative that we know the exact year since we are not commanded to observe His birthday.

Each year at the Christmas season, the

masses of contemporary society frantically observe a phantom holiday. The holiday which they are observing is not the birthday of the genuine Messiah, but the celebration of the Roman Saturnalia and Brumalia, the day of *natalis solis invicti* (birthday of the unconquerable sun). Since we can prove that the Messiah was not born at the winter solstice, should we continue to live a lie and observe a day which has come down to us through paganism? Should we merge pagan customs, such as decorating a tree, the Santa Claus myth, the yule log, with scriptural Truth? I trust that you will join me in a resounding cry of rejection of these pagan customs as we witness this hidden Truth with power to a lost and deceived world. (Concerning the decoration of trees, have you ever considered the passage in Jeremiah 10:2-11?) ■

### ***The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition***

To fill the need for a conservative, scholarly Bible using the sacred Names, the Assemblies of Yahweh undertook this project in 1981. This magnum opus is now in its sixth printing. This volume, **The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition**, is the culmination of more than five centuries of translation work. The Assemblies of Yahweh joyfully presents this volume to you, our reader, as what we consider the best translation of the Inspired Scriptures available in the world today.



After reading it we hope you will agree. Why not acquire your copy soon?

For information on:

**The Sacred Scriptures, Bethel Edition,**  
**The Sacred Name Broadcaster** magazine,  
and other available free literature,

write to:

**Assemblies of Yahweh**

**PO Box C**

**Bethel, PA 19507**

**[www.assembliesofyahweh.com](http://www.assembliesofyahweh.com)**