

“ The Sovereign Birth of God’s Son ”

Six days from today we will celebrate the birth of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who came to save us from sin’s penalty.

There are 195 countries in the world today, of which 160 celebrate Christmas in some way or another, while 36 do not in anyway observe Christmas.

Most of the world, until recent years, used a dating system focused on the birth of Jesus Christ, as follows: B.C., “before Christ,” marked all years before His birth; and A.D., Anno Domini, “in the year of our Lord,” marked all years after His arrival.

There is a growing effort today to delete BC and AD, permanently replacing them with BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era); this is an attempt to remove Christ and Christianity from all calendars. But, what is the pivotal date for BCE and CE? The very same as BC and AD, the birth of Christ.

This is yet another feeble attempt by a godless world to try and remove the message of Christmas, changing Merry Christmas to Merry xmas, Happy Holiday, or Seasons Greetings.

Christmas is a compound word made up of two words: Christ [the Anointed or Holy One], and Mass [an assembly or gathering for religious observances].

Easter celebrates and honors the sacrificial death and sovereign resurrection of God’s One and Only Son; God’s full and final payment for sin and provision of eternal life to everyone who believes in Him.

Christmas celebrates and honors the birth of God’s One and Only Son, God’s ultimate Gift to us, Jesus (God’s Salvation), Immanuel [God with us].

Read Luke 1:5-25... Zechariah is in the Holy of Holies when Gabriel tells him that his wife Elizabeth is going to give birth to a son, and he is to name him John [which means, *God is gracious*]; this son of theirs (see **verse 17**) will fulfill the prophecy of **Malachi 3:1**, “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear [prepare] the way before Me.” **4:6**, “He will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

Matthew 11:10-11, “This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.’ Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!”

Read Luke 1:26-38... Gabriel tells Mary she is going to have God’s Son, and also that her aunt Elizabeth (who had been barren) is now six months pregnant.

Read Luke 1:39-55... Mary visits her aunt Elizabeth and the Holy Spirit confirms that, Mary’s pregnancy is from God, just as Gabriel had said. We are told (**Luke 1:56**) that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned home.

The duty cycles [orders of division] at the Temple for Jewish priests included the seven major Feasts and Festivals (Passover, First fruits, Harvest, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Hanukkah), when applied to the narratives of what the NT records concerning the conception and the birth of both, Jesus and John (His cousin), some very amazing things are revealed.

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Mary's visit would have been late in the 9th month of Kislev (Nov/Dec); not surprisingly, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah [Festival of Lights] begins on the 25th day of Kislev, which is very close to our December 25, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus: the Light of the World.

In **John 8:12** Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

1John 1:5, “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

Read Luke 1:57-66... John (the Baptizer) would have the privilege to announce the beginning of the ministry of God’s Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

John (the Baptizer) was six months older than Jesus, and since John's birth was near or during Passover in the month of Nisan (Mar/April), Jesus would have then been born six months later, in the month of Tishri (Sept/Oct), about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Our celebration of Christmas doesn't line up with the actual birthdate of Jesus, but it very likely lines up with the time of Christ’s conception in the womb of Mary.

Read Luke 2:1-7... Joseph took Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to register in the town of their ancestors, according to the census. While there, it came time for the baby to be born, and they could find no place to stay because the city was overcrowded with visitors who had come to register for the census, all those with ancestors who were from Bethlehem must come.

Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, God’s Son. He was born in a stable behind an inn, and placed in a manger [feeding trough for animals].

Read Luke 2:8-20 An angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds, announcing the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. The angel said God would validate this marvelous event with a sign (**Luke 2:12**), the baby would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

The shepherds then went to Bethlehem to see all God had done; they found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, who was lying in a manger, just as they had been told.

Shepherds were near the bottom of the Jewish social order, because they couldn't keep the religious rituals and ceremonies. Out of all the people in and around Jerusalem, God chose a small group of shepherds to witness the birth of His Son.

It is interesting that Jesus said (**John 10:11**), “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.” **1Peter 5:4**, Jesus is called the Chief Shepherd.

After looking upon the baby Jesus, **Luke 2:18** says the shepherds went out into the streets, sharing the good news that the Savior had indeed been born; and yet, there is no record of anyone else making their way to see the baby Jesus.

Luke 2:19 says, “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart,” all these things meaning: the angel’s announcement about her Holy pregnancy, Joseph’s response to this news, Elizabeth’s marvelous greeting, and the special names given to Mary’s baby: “Jesus” and “Immanuel.”

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The shepherds (**Luke 2:20**) “went back [returned to their flocks], glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.”

Jesus’ first advent was in the flesh of a baby boy; the next time He will come as a Warrior, the Eternal King, Sovereign Lord, and Righteous Judge over All (cf. **Revelation 19:11-16**).

At Jesus’ first advent, there was no room for Him to be born; when He returns, He will be the landlord of the universe (cf. **John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-4**).

Only a few shepherds witnessed Jesus’ first advent; but when He returns, everyone in the world will see Him (cf. **Revelation 1:7**).

More books and song lyrics have been written about Jesus, and more paintings and artwork have been done of Him, than anyone else in history.

The world’s dating system (B.C., A.D.), two major holidays (Christmas, Easter), and the praise and worship of billions of followers, declares that this Jesus is indeed very, very, special. **Galatians 4:4-5**, “When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

At just the right time, according to God’s plan, God the Son put on the flesh of a son of man, in order to provide payment for our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, in order that we might become children of God now, and live with Him forever.

Hebrews 9:26-28, “Once at the consummation of the ages He [Jesus] has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to* sin, to those who eagerly await Him.”

Jesus [the Christ] came to do away with the eternal curse and condemnation of sin, by providing forgiveness and eternal life to those who believe in Him.

The most important question that you, or any other person, must ever answer is this, “Who do you genuinely believe Jesus Christ to be?” The Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, to a virgin named Mary; confirmed by God the Father at the Jordan River and on the Mount of Transfiguration; the Jesus who was hung on a cross to die for our sins, then placed in a tomb, only to rise again on the third day; and for a period of 40 days He appeared to His followers; after which He ascended into heaven to be with the Father, until it is time for Him to come back and take us to be with Him forever.

John 10:10, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly,” **28**, “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish.”

2Peter 1:3-4, “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

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1John 5:11-13, “And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

That’s a pretty good reason to say,

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Mike Hale