

God With Us

December 22, 2019

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”-John 1:14

...and they will call him Immanuel", which means "God with us". -Matthew 1:23

Dwell – Tabernacle

- God didn't want to be outside the camp.
- Layout of the Israelite camp in the shape of a cross with the Tabernacle being in the center.
- “Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: **“On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.** And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was raised up. Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”-Exodus 40:1-2, 17, 34 NKJV

Question: When was Jesus Born?

The earliest source stating 25 December as the date of birth of Jesus is likely by Hippolytus of Rome, written very early in the 3rd century, based on the assumption that the conception of Jesus took place at the Spring equinox which he placed on 25 March, and then added nine months...-Wikipedia

- Most likely NOT December 25
 - Roman Catholic Church co-opted the pagan celebration of the Saturnalia as a way to celebrate the birth of Christ.
 - Saturnalia - *“The holiday was celebrated with a sacrifice at the Temple of Saturn, in the Roman Forum, and a public banquet, followed by private gift-giving, continual partying, and a carnival atmosphere...” -Wikipedia*
 - Early church observances were based more on man's reasoning rather than on God's word and His ways.

What we do know:

- It's the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of Kings to search it out. -Proverbs 25:2
- The whole Bible points to Jesus!
- God used the Old Testament laws as types and shadows pointing us to the reality of Jesus.
- *Jesus fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies!!!*
 - *For one person to fulfill 8 prophecies requires a 1 in one zillion chance*
 - *48 prophecies? – 1 in 10¹⁵⁷*
- Jesus was born during the time of Herod the Great.

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- Herod died “two weeks before Passover, in 4 BC”. -Rick Lanser Mdiv
- Jesus most likely born two years *prior* to his death in 6 BC.
 - BC = Before Christ
 - AD = Anno Domini - “year of our Lord”

Popular Christian theories of Jesus’ birth timeframe:

- Late fall (feast of tabernacles)
- Hanukkah (feast of Lights)
- Spring

Clues that Jesus may have been born in the spring

1. Clue # 1 - Shepherds

- “keeping watch over their flocks **by night**” -Luke 2:7
- Shepherds not likely out in the fields during the winter.
 - December is a notably cold month in Bethlehem. It is not uncommon to have snowfall. R.B.Y. Scott, Vol. 3, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1962, p. 625).
 - “The temperature in the area of Bethlehem in December averages around 44 degrees Fahrenheit but can drop to well below freezing, especially at night. Snow is common for two or three days in Jerusalem and nearby Bethlehem in December and January. These were the winter months of increased precipitation in Messiah's time, when the roads became practically unusable and people stayed mostly indoors. - <http://messianicfellowship.50webs.com/yeshuabirth1.html>
 - Higher precipitation Nov-Jan
 - Would more likely to be in the fields from spring through fall
- Some scholars have suggested that “lambing season” happens only in the spring between March-April.
 - The Shepherd’s jobs were to “watch” for the birth of the lambs.
 - Bethlehem the place lambs were kept for the annual sacrifices? (Jonathan Cahn)
- Most scholars do agree that winter is not a likely time for shepherds to be out at night with their flocks.

2. Clue #2 - The Star of Bethlehem (the Magi’s star)

- “After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod, wise men from the east arrived unexpectedly in Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” - Matthew 2:1-2 HCSB

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- Astrologers from Persia
 - Studied the stars
 - God made the moon and the stars to act as signs for “appointed times” (Genesis 1:14)
 - Note: this does not mean we’re called to worship stars or find our guidance from them. BUT God did use them to speak to these leaders.
 - Knew a “king of the Jews was born”
 - Is it possible Daniel taught them about the coming Messiah and what to look for?
 - According to ancient history, certain stars, planets, and constellations represented kingdoms.
 - Jupiter – represented “king”
 - Aries (constellation) represented the Judean region
 - Major Jupiter/lunar eclipse happened WITHIN the constellation of Aries on March 20, 6 BC. (This is documented and extremely rare—only one other time from 200 BC – 1 BC (136 BC).
 - On 6 BC March 20, 1 min after sunset in Jerusalem the Moon occulted [had a conjunction with] Jupiter while in Aries. Mars was also present in Aries about 7½° above the Moon and Jupiter. The occultation ended half an hour later almost on the horizon. - Michael R. Molnar, “The Magi’s Star from the Perspective of Ancient Astrological Practices”
3. Zachariah the Priest
- We know Jesus was born 6 months after John the Baptist (Luke 1:26)
 - We know the order of the priests (1 Chronicles 24:1-30)
 - We know Zachariah was in the Abijah order
 - We just need to know the date he was serving in the temple when the angel appeared to him.
 - Based on the known order of priests serving the day the temple was destroyed (AD 70) we can count backwards to find out when Zachariah’s order was serving.
 - **Zachariah would have been serving (November 29–December 6) 8 BC**
 - If Mary came to visit Elizabeth while she was in her 6th month of pregnancy, then she visited her sometime in May/June.
 - She stayed with her another 3 months but didn’t stay for John’s birth. Why? (return to the feast of Tabernacle with Joseph)
 - John would have been born in September 7 BC timeframe which would put Jesus being born in March 6 BC.
4. Holy Days of Israel – the central events of the Messiah’s life all take place on Hebrew holy days. (Holidays)
- Jesus dies on Passover (Nisan 14/15)

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- Jesus rises again on The Feast of First Fruits
- Next major holy day in the Jewish calendar – Shavu’ot = Pentecost
 - Feast of Weeks = 50 days from Passover

- The first Hebrew holy day is Palm Sunday (Exodus 12:6)
 - “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall **keep (receive)** it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.” -Exodus 12:5-6 NKJV
 - The tenth of Nisan = the day of the lamb
 - The day they take the lamb to their house keep it there 4 days until the day of the sacrifice.
 - Count back from the last supper (Passover) on the 14 of Nisan and you have Palm Sunday (the 10 of Nisan)

 - **On the day that Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem, the people of Israel are all taking the Passover lamb to their houses!!!**
 - God is taking the lamb who takes away the sin of the world to HIS house on Nisan 10.
 - The first command ever given to Israel was “receive” the lamb.
- **If Jesus’s dies on a Hebrew holy day and he rises on a Hebrew holy day, he begins His church on a Hebrew holy day...wouldn’t he be BORN on a holy day?**
- The question is which one?
- The age begins with Passover (spring) and ends with Tabernacle (fall)
- Only a few days left in Nisan
- Is there any day on the calendar that has to do with birth/new beginning?
 - Nisan 1 – the very beginning of the Hebrew calendar— real new year
 - Old calendar ends—new one begins
 - Males not required to be in Jerusalem

Why Nisan 1?

- “God did not single out the first day of Nisan as warranting special observance as an “appointed time.” Nevertheless, God Himself chose it later as the date when the Tabernacle was first set up: **“On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting”** (Exodus 40:2). That passage comes to a climax at verse 34: “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

- **Nisan 1 was thus a truly significant date in Jewish history, the date when God first tabernacled with man.**

Further Study:

<https://biblearchaeology.org/research/the-daniel-9-24-27-project/4368-pinpointing-the-date-of-christ-s-birth>

<https://youtu.be/ptlsXtTf6n0>