



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 23, 2012

P.O. Box 416
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Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Bobby Bear
Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

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WHEN WAS JESUS BORN

By Alden Bass

Luke gives us more information on the time of Jesus' birth than any other Gospel writer. According to his account, Joseph and Mary traveled from Galilee to Judea in order to be registered for the Roman Government. This occurred "in the days of Caesar Augustus" while Quirinius was governing Syria" (**Luke 2:1-2**). We also know from Matthew's account that the event occurred during the reign of Herod the Great. All of these names may be confusing, but in the ancient world, time was often marked by the reign of political leaders. So, using that system, we might say that the American Civil War began in the days of President Lincoln. This is all the information the Bible directly gives concerning the time of Christ's birth.

Based on the information in the Gospel accounts and secular history, scholars agree that Jesus' birth probably occurred in 4 B.C. This is interesting because our calendar system is supposed to begin with Christ's birth, which is why we date things A.D. (an abbreviation of the Latin words *anno domini*, meaning "year of our Lord"). The man who invented our current calendar system, a scholar named Dionysius, miscalculated the year of Jesus' birth, and the problem has never been fixed.

The specific date of Christ's birth is celebrated today as December 25th, a day we call Christmas. The name of this familiar holiday comes from "Christ's Mass," which originated as a pagan feast day among the Romans that honored the birth of Sol, the Sun god. The feast day was adopted in A.D. 354 by religious leaders in Rome, and has been observed ever since.

The truth is that the Bible does not give an exact date for Jesus' entrance into this world. Luke reports that shepherds were in the fields tending their flocks (**2:8ff**) – evidence that the birth of Jesus was very likely not in December at all (the fields would have been wet and cold then), but probably sometime between April and September. Many dates have been suggested, but all are mere guesses. Perhaps God intentionally withheld the date because He knew that men would focus on one special day instead of worshipping all year long on the appointed day – Sunday. Early Christians remembered Christ's birth, death and resurrection all year round, and so should we.

PEACE ON EARTH?

What was the first message to the world following the birth of Jesus? The first message was not delivered to religious leaders, political leaders, or, the business community, no instead it was delivered to shepherds.

Luke 2:8-20, *“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.”*

In these verses we find that the angels praised God and the message to man was one of peace. The message was needed then and now with all of the wars and rumors of war in our world.

The peace the angels spoke of is “to all people” (**Luke 2:10**). A Savior has been born. To have peace man must be saved, but saved from what? Man must be saved from sin, sin robs men of peace. The Christ has come, the anointed of God that the prophets foretold has come. As Isaiah spoke of Christ, the Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6-7**). The Lord (Lord means ruler), Jesus must be our Lord (**Luke 6:46**).

The world wants peace; but can't find it. Who has peace? 1. Those justified (**Romans 5:1-3**). Peace is not the absence of trouble, but instead a calmness of spirit in dealing with trouble. 2. Those who let God's peace rule their minds (**Philippians 4:4-7**). 3. Those who try to make peace (**Matthew 5:9**). Though challenging, peace has to be made.

Peace is personal in application. Peace is within! This is why the Gospel is called “the Gospel of peace.”