



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 20, 2015

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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

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 10:00 a.m.

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BAH-HUMBUGH: DECEMBER 25

As I consider a title for this article, I thought of the words “Bah-Humbugh!” I found it interestingly appropriate that the closest meaning I could find for “Bah-Humbugh” was this: non-sense or something to deceive; a hoax or fraud. We know the words from the famous Charles Dickens book “A Christmas Carol.” This novel published around 1843 has had a great cultural influence on many Christmas traditions.

At the time you will read this, it will be just five days until the day that is called Christmas. Many of us know that Jesus was not likely born on December 25, but we still see signs everywhere stating that “Jesus is the reason for the season.” In fact, there are many misconceptions of Christmas just like this.

You may be asking yourself, how we can know that Jesus was not born on December 25 and if he was not – when was he born? The fact is that we cannot assign a specific date from the Bible, because the Bible simply does not say. However, I do believe there are some pretty good clues that can get us close to a time frame of the birth of Christ.

The first clue that I am going to mention is in **Luke 2:8**. In this verse, we find the shepherds were out in the fields keeping watch over their flock. It is not likely they would have been out in the fields in December, since this is a rainy and cold month in this area. Bethlehem receives 70% of its annual rainfall between November and January. So, if the month is not December, then when was Jesus likely born? Perhaps we can get an idea from a study of Jesus cousin, John the Baptist. In **Luke 1:5**, we read that Zacharias was a priest of the course of Abia. Abia tells us the time in which he would have served. This is the eighth course of service, and because of the feast day, it would have fallen in the ninth week. The Month of Nisan is the first month of the Hebrew calendar and corresponds with our month of March. Therefore, if we count out nine weeks, Zacharias’ time of service fell in the month of May. In **Luke 1:23-24**, we learn that just after his service he returned home and his wife Elizabeth conceived. Further reading of **Luke 1** informs us that Mary conceived Jesus six months later than John (**Luke 1:25-31**). Therefore, if John was conceived around May, Jesus would have been conceived around November. Nine months from November would put us in the month of August. In the month of August the shepherds would have been in the field, and it would have been a more likely time for a census to have been held. Remember, Joseph and Mary were traveling to Bethlehem for a census (**Luke 2:1-7**).

Again, the Bible does not say exactly when Jesus was born. However, I do believe God has left us clues that we as good students can put to use. I am not trying to condemn Christmas. However, I do have strong reservations about binding it a religious holiday. I just want to be sure to maintain truth and respect for the Scriptures in all matters.

Doug Tooley, revised

WHAT SOME BELIEVE

It is interesting the things that people believe religiously without checking the facts with the Bible. In illustrating this, consider some things that people believe about the birth of Christ.

Many believe that the star that led the wise men to the Christ was of the magnitude of a distant super nova, something very bright and magnificent.

Truth: If the star that guided the wise men was of great brilliance, why does King Herod need to ask the wise men when the star appeared? **Matthew 2:7**, *“Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.”* This was something that was recognized by the wise men (likely astronomers) and not a country wide event.

Many believe that “three” wise men came to see the newborn Jesus on the night of His birth.

Truth: The Bible teaches that there were three gifts, gold frankincense and myrrh. **Matthew 2:11**, *“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”* Likely the belief that there were “3” wise men stems from the fact that there were 3 types of gifts. However, there may have been 2 wise men, there may have been 10 wise men, we simply do not know.

Many believe that the wise men came to see the Christ while He was still in the stable.

Truth: Again, **Matthew 2:11** says, *“And when they were come into the house.”* While the shepherds came to the manger (**Luke 2:8-10**), but the wise men came to Joseph’s house. Additionally, Herod ordered the slaughter of the babies two years of age and younger. This means that the child would be well under two years old, in order that no error could be made in killing Jesus, but it also indicates that Jesus was older than a newborn.

As we ponder this, let us consider that if a person will believe something religiously merely because it is believed by a large number of people and not based upon the Bible, is it likely they err on other points for the same reason, merely because many people believe it?

Let us remember that we must *“learn not to go beyond the things which are written”* **I Corinthians 4:6.**

Jerry Sturgill