

THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' DATE OF BIRTH : PART 1

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Late last night as I lay in bed with a bad headache and a bad toothache, my mind turned to thinking about some of the topics we have been discussing lately on Facebook during this Christmas season; one of them, of course, being whether or not Christians should even celebrate Christmas. As some of you will know, this is a hotly debated subject, and some Christians -- myself included -- are quick to take one side or the other regarding this matter. Concerning my position, as I point out in some of my Christmas-related graphics, as well as in the article entitled "Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas?", personally, I do not celebrate Christmas for a variety of reasons, which I will briefly summarize in the following paragraphs.

In the aforementioned article, I discuss some of the events surrounding the reign of Emperor Constantine I -- also known

as Constantine the Great -- which had a direct effect on our Christian faith, and which sowed the seeds for the eventual rise of the powerful Roman Catholic Church. As I point out there, one manner in which the nascent Roman Catholic Church exerted influence over the masses, and attracted the heathen to its doors was by so-called "Christianizing" certain pagan beliefs and customs. In short, it compromised with the pagan world around it by mixing Christian beliefs with pagan ones.

In particular, one very popular Roman festival was known as Saturnalia. As you can probably discern by its name, this festival received its name from the Roman god of agriculture and harvest. That is, Saturn. While this festival was in progress, the roles of master and slave were reversed, moral restrictions were loosened to some degree, and the rules of etiquette were also ignored. No doubt drunkenness, revelry and sexual immorality were quite rampant during this period. Initially, Saturnalia was a one-day festival which occurred on December 17th. However, eventually, it was extended so that it lasted for a full week. That is, from December 17th to December 23rd.

What this means is that the festival of Saturnalia eventually came to engulf the Winter Solstice which occurred on either December 21st or on December 22nd. For those of you who may not be familiar with the term, Wikipedia offers the following explanation:

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"The winter solstice . . . occurs when one of the Earth's poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun. It happens twice yearly, once in each hemisphere (Northern and Southern). For that hemisphere, the winter solstice is the day with the shortest period of daylight and longest night of the year, when the Sun is at its lowest daily maximum elevation in the sky. At the pole, there is continuous darkness or twilight around the winter solstice. Its opposite is the summer solstice.

The winter solstice occurs during the hemisphere's winter. In the Northern Hemisphere, this is the December solstice (usually 21 or 22 December) and in the Southern Hemisphere, this is the June solstice (usually 20 or 21 June). Although the winter solstice itself lasts only a moment, the term sometimes refers to the day on which it occurs. Other names are "midwinter", the "extreme of winter" (Dongzhi), or the

"shortest day". Traditionally, in many temperate regions, the winter solstice is seen as the middle of winter, but today in some countries and calendars, it is seen as the beginning of winter. In meteorology, winter is reckoned as beginning about three weeks before the winter solstice.

Since prehistory, the winter solstice has been seen as a significant time of year in many cultures, and has been marked by festivals and rituals. It marked the symbolic death and rebirth of the Sun."

----- End Quote -----

What I would like to call to your attention is the very last sentence of the previous explanation, because it is rather important to our discussion. As I mentioned a moment ago, it is a historical fact that in order to increase its size, power and influence, the early Roman Catholic Church began to so-called "Christianize" some of the beliefs and customs of the heathen people that it had begun to absorb. It is my personal belief -- and that of many other Christians as well -- that this is exactly what the RCC did with the Saturnalia festival. In other words, Saturnalia was converted into a Christian holy day and holy season.

Exactly how did the so-called "mother church" accomplish this feat? Well, just as the Winter Solstice on December 21 or 22 marks the day when the Sun resumes its northerly course, and begins to bring longer and warmer days, and the hope of new life to the frozen countries of the northern hemisphere, the Roman Catholic Church chose to give the Saturnalia festival, and the Winter Solstice, a new "Christianized" meaning, when it introduced the birth of the Son of God on December 25th, who would likewise bring hope and new life to the world. In fact, the hope of Eternal Life. In short, the rebirth of the Sun became the Birth of the Son. Do you see how sly that is? So it was a compromise between the pagan belief system and the Christian belief system.

But here's the problem: The Bible offers some strong evidence that Jesus was not even born anywhere near that time of year. In the Gospel of Luke we find the following interesting verse:

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

Luke 2:8, KJV

At first glance, many Christians don't even realize what that verse is indicating. Some aren't even aware of its existence. Stated more simply, unless I am mistaken, Jewish shepherds did not abide in the field, with their grazing flocks, in the middle of the cold, dead winter when there wasn't anything on the ground for their flocks to eat. At the very least, the weather would have been very cold and very rainy on December 25th in the land of Israel. Please also notice that the verse specifically states at night, which would have been the very coldest part of the day. So in all likelihood, the flocks and the shepherds would have been indoors at that time; at least in a cave or in a barn. To validate this point, consider the following info I extracted from the www.bethlehem-city.org website:

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Winter lasts for three months, from mid-December to mid-March, and can be severe . . . Summer temperatures reach 35° centigrade and in the winter temperature may drop to Zero . . . The rainy season starts in the second half of autumn (mid-October) and continues until the end of April. Heavy rain is, however, limited to fewer than 50 days, with around 70% of the rain falling during November to February . . . Bethlehem receives an average of seven hours of sunshine a day during the winter and thirteen hours during the summer . . . Average temperatures range from 9-18° C in winter and 26- 30° C in summer.

----- End Quote -----

While some Westerners automatically equate the Winter season with heavy snowfall, please note that due to its subtropical climate, snow is very rare in Israel, and is usually limited to the area near Mount Hermon in the northern Golan Heights. However, due to the hilly topography of the region of Judea, some of the higher elevations -- such as Jerusalem -- also receive at least one snowfall each year. Being as Bethlehem is located only five miles south of Jerusalem, I assume that it likewise receives snowfall occasionally as well. So what we see then is that Bethlehem -- the birthplace of Jesus -- experiences a cold, rainy season which lasts from the middle of December to the middle of March; during which time there is very limited sunlight, and temperatures can drop to 0° C.

I am sure that even you realize that this kind of weather is not conducive to shepherding flocks at night, outside, during

the Winter season. What we are able to safely conclude then, is that Luke 2:8 must therefore be referring to some other time of year. I am familiar with two different schools of thought. One suggests that Jesus may have been born sometime in September or October; and the other posits that the Lord may have been born sometime during the Spring. Whatever the case may be, this one verse from the Gospel of Luke clearly nullifies and exposes the Roman Catholic deception of Jesus Christ being born on Christmas day, December 25th. It just is not so. Period.

While the previous paragraphs explain the primary Scriptural evidence for rejecting the claim that Jesus was born on the 25th of December, there are other reasons why I personally refuse to celebrate Christmas. Aside from the fact that to do so is to promote and perpetuate a lie regarding the time of Jesus' birth, we must also consider that the Scriptures warn us clearly to beware of becoming entrapped by the traditions of the world which nullify the truth of God's Word. One verse in particular which comes to mind is the following one which was written by the Apostle Paul:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."
Colossians 2:8, KJV

What I find rather interesting is the numerology of these two verses. In other words, Luke 2:8 clearly reveals that Jesus was not born on December 25th, and Colossians 2:8 warns us to beware of the traditions of men -- such as Christmas -- which nullify the truth of God's Word. The Apostle Paul was in essence paraphrasing what Jesus had likewise said to His religious persecutors -- the Scribes and the Pharisees -- in the following verses:

"Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. THUS HAVE YE MADE THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT BY YOUR

TRADITION."

Matthew 15:1-6, KJV

So both Jesus and the Apostle Paul are making it very clear how the misguided traditions of men can nullify the truth of God's Word. Returning to Colossians 2:8 for a moment, please notice in particular three important phrases: "vain deceit", "tradition of men" and "rudiments of the world." Is that not precisely what the annual Christmas celebration is? It is a deception and a tradition of men which celebrates something which really didn't even happen on that day. As I've shared before, there are many other Scriptures in the Bible which also emphasize the importance of our remaining separate from the world as much as we possibly can. Consider closely the following group of verses which highlight this point:

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

John 15:19, KJV

"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

John 17:14-15, KJV

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

John 18:36, KJV

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,"

2 Corinthians 6:17, KJV

"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

2 Timothy 2:4, KJV

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things

declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."

Hebrews 11:13-16, KJV

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

James 4:4, KJV

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

1 John 2:15-16, KJV

In my opinion, when Christians observe the annual Christmas celebration, they are doing so in direct contradiction to the previous set of verses. They are acting just like the children of the world. They are not setting themselves apart from the world. They are in fact joining it, and committing spiritual adultery with it, exactly as the Apostles warned us not to do. They are compromising their faith, as well as perpetuating the Christmas lie. To add insult to injury, even if Jesus was born on December 25th -- which we know He was not -- the Lord is overshadowed every year by a jolly fat man in a red suit who supposedly flies around in a great sled drawn by flying reindeer. What a tragedy for our faith that even some Christian parents teach this nonsense to their impressionable children. So it is one lie told upon another.

Let's be honest here, shall we? The fact of the matter is that even in the strongest of Christian families, whenever the Christmas season rolls around each year, the very first thing on young children's minds -- whether they embrace our faith or not -- is "What am I going to get this year?" Yes, they may remember the birth of Jesus in the back of their young minds if their parents are faithful to teach them so, but all of that Christmas joy, eagerness and anticipation comes from "What presents await me tomorrow?". True or not? Thus we see that some Christian parents are doing exactly

what the Apostle John says not to do in 1 John 2:15-16. They are teaching their children to lust after the things of the world at an early age. Those kids are getting their first taste of the "good" old vice of materialism. Can you see it now?

So there is no denying that while a small percentage of the world population may remember the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas time -- even though He was not born then -- for the majority of people, Christmas has been reduced to being the most lucrative commercial holiday during the entire year. Not only that, but the jolly, old, fat man who seduces children to lust after things is leading the pack! It is a season clearly marked by political correctness and extreme peer pressure. After all, if you don't spend piles of money to purchase gifts for your family and friends -- even if you really can't afford to do so -- there must be something very wrong with you. You must be an old scrooge, right? Now that is the truth with a bark on it.

In their attempt to justify their compromise with the world, some weak Christians may say, "Oh, but everyone celebrates Christmas; even in non-Christian countries!" Yes, that may indeed be true. But wake up! Since when are our Christian beliefs and practices based on what the rest of the secular world believes and does? Aren't our beliefs supposed to be based on God's Word and God's Word alone? Furthermore, the fact that they are not a Christian nation says a lot. Is it that difficult for some Christians to understand that such people aren't celebrating Christmas because they actually believe in Jesus and want to remember His birth, but rather because just like many other people in the world, they have figured out that the annual Christmas season is a cash cow?

So I am sorry to inform you, but insofar as this wicked, fallen world is concerned, Jesus Christ is most definitely not the reason for the season as so many of my misguided Christian brethren erroneously claim year after year. In fact, as I have mentioned before, He was never a part of Christmas to begin with, because He was not born on December 25th. So what those misguided people are actually saying is that they are re-adding Jesus to a celebration which He was never a part of in the first place. Crazy, is it not? To reiterate, the reason for the season is the profit margin. Those merchants are probably laughing behind your backs as you go deep into debt in order to keep up appearances with your friends and family, and so you don't appear as an

oddball to them. There's plenty of room in that sardine can.

Another common excuse we often hear regarding why certain Christians choose to celebrate Christmas, is because they are under the erroneous impression that people are more receptive to the Christian Gospel during Christmas time. They are a little softer in their hearts we are told. Now, obviously, I don't have any evidence to support this claim one way or the other. However, I do believe that there is a simple test which each one of us can perform in order to answer this question. That test comes in the form of two simple questions. First, how many people do you personally know who came to faith in Jesus Christ as a result of the Christmas season during the past year, or even during the past five years?

The second question is similar to the first one. Exactly how many people have you PERSONALLY led to the Lord at Christmas time during the past year, or even during the past five years? Answer those two questions, and I think you will have a clear answer regarding how effective Christmas time is as a Christian witnessing tool.

Another way in which certain Christians attempt to justify Santa Claus and the giving of gifts at Christmas time, is by pointing to a Fourth Century individual known as Nikolaos of Myra. This bishop -- who was later promoted to sainthood by the Roman Catholic Church -- was known for his piety -- a trait which is commonly attributed to many Roman Catholic saints -- as well as his habit of secretly giving gifts to the poor, and supposedly performing a number of miracles throughout his life. He later became known as Saint Nicholas -- or Saint Nick -- and it is through him that the modern legend of Santa Claus -- or Sinterklass -- is derived.

But here's the thing: Even if some of that is remotely true -- there is much doubt, because what is known of him was in fact written centuries after his death, and no contemporary chroniclers mention him in their works -- it still does not change the basic fact that the annual Christmas celebration is based on the lie that Jesus was born on December 25th. Let me also point out that I find it highly suspect that Nicholas of Myra lived at the same time as Emperor Constantine I, when the Roman Catholic Church first began taking control of the Roman Empire. If you have read any amount of ancient Roman Catholic history, you will know that it is full of a great deal of exaggeration and embellishment; particularly when it

comes to the lives of their saints.

Then there are certain Christians who will also endeavor to justify celebrating Christmas each year, and the tradition of gift-giving, by pointing to the shepherds in the field, as well as to the gifts which were presented by the three Magi from the East. So let's set the record straight.

First of all, neither those shepherds, or the Magi, ever established any kind of an official, annual celebration regarding the birth of Jesus Christ. As far as the shepherds were concerned, the Scriptures seem to indicate that they just happened to be in the right place at the right time. That is, near the place where Christ was born. So it is no wonder that the Angels would suddenly appear before them rejoicing, or that the shepherds would be curious to behold this wonderful sight with their own eyes. But again, there are no recorded instructions in the Scriptures where those shepherds were told to begin an annual celebration of Jesus' birth, as many Christians do today.

The very same can be said of the three Magi from the East. While they too were very curious to behold this new King which their reading of the stars had foretold, and in fact traveled a great distance to do so, neither did the Magi establish an annual celebration regarding the birth of the King of Kings. In fact, the Scriptures make it clear that after meeting Joseph, Mary and the young boy Jesus, the Magi decided to return to their own country by another way -- instead of returning to wicked King Herod -- because they deduced Herod's very evil intentions towards Jesus, and were warned in a dream to avoid Herod, as we see by these verses:

"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. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

Matthew 2:11-12, KJV

Just like the shepherds, the Magi came to behold this new king of the Jews, and to pay Him homage. It was only fitting that they should present gifts to this young king-to-be, as was the custom in those days. Furthermore, as I explain in the series "Birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem", it is my personal belief that through their expensive gifts, they

also provided His parents with the financial means to make an unanticipated and quick escape to Egypt, where they remained until the death of King Herod. For all we know, as a result of wicked Herod's orders, Joseph and Mary may have had to drop everything, and flee with only the clothes on their backs, and a few belongings. After all, Bethlehem was not far from Jerusalem.

Perhaps the gifts of the three Magi enabled them to live in Egypt in relative comfort until the time arrived for them to return to Israel. In fact, while it is just speculation on my part, maybe there was even enough money remaining so that Joseph was able to start his own carpentry business once they arrived in the northern village of Nazareth. The point is, God used those three strangers from the East to provide for His children in the most unexpected way. Furthermore, as I believe is explained in other documents on the Bill's Bible Basics website, each of those three gifts carried symbolic significance as well.

So to reiterate my main point, the shepherds in the field going to behold the baby Jesus, and rejoicing at His birth, was not the same as establishing an annual holiday in honor of His birth, which did not occur on December 25th anyway. Likewise, when the three Magi arrived about two years later to pay the young boy Jesus homage, and also to present His parents with expensive gifts, they did not establish any kind of annual holiday either. Let me also add that when it did begin, such gift-giving amongst members of the Roman Catholic Church was practiced between the wealthy and the elite. Online resources note that Saint Nicholas in fact came from a wealthy family.

To be clear then, Christmas is a human invention. It is in fact a Roman Catholic invention, just like so many other false beliefs and false practices which originated in that wayward church. It has no basis whatsoever in the Bible.

Taking this thought a step further, many of you will be familiar with the Puritans. As you may know, one of the big reasons why they chose to leave England and come to America, was so that they could practice their Christian faith as they saw fit, based on their understanding of the Scriptures. They viewed the Church of England -- or the Anglican Church as it is also known -- as a corrupt, misguided institution which had not sufficiently reformed or shed all its Roman Catholic ways. After all, to be honest, Anglicanism is just another

flavor of Roman Catholicism for the most part. But what you may not know is that when the Puritans arrived in America, they absolutely refused to celebrate Christmas, because they recognized its pagan origins. In fact, as online research will clearly reveal, Christmas was outlawed by the Puritans, and was not recognized as a legal holiday in the United States until 1836 in the state of Alabama. Are you surprised to learn that Christmas in America is not as old as you thought?

Aside from all of the previous reasons, there is another Scriptural reason why I choose to not participate in the Christmas celebration. As I have shared with my readers a number of times previously, in the New Testament Scriptures, whenever Jesus, the Apostles and the Disciples preached, and whenever we read the Gospels, the Book of Acts, the Epistles and the Book of Revelation, aside from the Lord's birth being mentioned in the first chapter of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, what we discover is that they constantly emphasized Christ's Death and Resurrection, and not His actual birth. Now ask yourself. Why did they do this?

Well, it is my personal belief that it is because Christ's Death and Resurrection is the indisputable proof that our faith is real. His Death and Resurrection is what gives each of us hope for our own future. That is to say, it gives us hope that if we should die, we too shall one day rise from the dead, shed these mortal bodies, and live for eternity in the Kingdom of God. The Apostle Paul in fact refers to the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us as a sort of down payment of faith, and as the "earnest of the Spirit", as "a treasure in earthen vessels", as our "blessed hope" and as "the hope of glory", as we see by the following group of verses:

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY:"

Colossians 1:25-27, KJV

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, and the

glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

Titus 2:11-13, KJV

"Who hath also sealed us, and given the EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT in our hearts."

2 Corinthians 1:22, KJV

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT."

2 Corinthians 5:1-5, KJV

Please go to part two for the continuation of this series.

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THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' DATE OF BIRTH : PART 2

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Scriptural Reminders Of Coming Resurrection From The Dead, Jesus' Death And Resurrection Is Central Pivot Of Our Hope And Of Our Faith, Jesus Is Firstfruits Of The Resurrection, We Shall Be Changed Into The Likeness Of Christ, Estimated Dates Of Christ's Birth, Jesus' Death And Resurrection Are More Important Than The Date Of His Birth, Personal Theory Regarding Why Jesus' Date Of Birth Was Hidden, Circumcision In The Temple, Joseph And Mary Return To Nazareth, Jesus In The Temple At Twelve Years Old, Herod The Great Orders The

Extermination Of Bethlehem's Children, The Flight To Egypt, Herod's Death And Return To Israel, Joseph's Protective Caution, Annual Pilgrimages To Jerusalem, Jesus Had Both Physical And Spiritual Enemies From The Moment That He Was Born, Power Of The Herods, Joseph And Mary's Endeavors To Protect Jesus, Reaction Of Childless Parents In Bethlehem, The Jerusalemites Looked Down Upon Their Northern Brethren, Nathaniel's Famous Question, Ambiguity Surrounding Jesus' Early Life And Age, Luke: Physician Writer And Companion To The Apostle Paul, Luke's Accurate Understanding Of Events

Consider also the following verses where the Apostle Paul and other writers of the New Testament constantly reminded their followers of their hope in their coming resurrection from the dead. This hope is what kept them going, and this same hope is what keeps us going today as well, despite any adversities we may face in this present life:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Romans 8:18-25, KJV

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope;"

1 Timothy 1:1, KJV

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

Titus 1:1-2, KJV

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Titus 3:7, KJV

"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Hebrews 3:5-6, KJV

"And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:"

Hebrews 6:11, KJV

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ . . . Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God."

1 Peter 1:13, 21, KJV

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

1 Peter 1:3-5, KJV

Now, in case it isn't fully evident to you, all of the faith, and all of the hope that is expressed in the previous set of verses is based on one thing: Christ's Death and Resurrection from the dead. Jesus' Death and Resurrection is the central pivot of our faith and of our hope. By His clear example and victory over death, Jesus Christ proved that God's Word is true. He proved that death can be overcome. He proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that there is an afterlife. Really think about that. Many men are born every single day, and many men die everyday as well. There is nothing remarkable or even extraordinary about it. But only one man -- Jesus Christ -- died and rose from the dead about two thousand years ago. In that way, He became the Firstfruits of the Resurrection, the Firstborn among many brethren, and the First Begotten of the

dead, as we clearly see by the following group of verses:

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be THE FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN."

Romans 8:29, KJV

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the FIRSTFRUITS of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming."

1 Corinthians 15:19-23, KJV

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, THE FIRSTBORN OF EVERY CREATURE . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:12-15, 18, KJV

"To the general assembly and CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"

Hebrews 12:23, KJV

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood . . . I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Revelation 1:5, 18, KJV

That is precisely why our spiritual forefathers emphasized Christ's Death and Resurrection, and not His birth date, which to our present day remains shrouded in total mystery. That is why early Christians were willing to endure mockery, persecution, incarceration, scourgings, torture, being torn apart by wild animals, beheadings, being stoned to death,

being cut down by the sword, being burned alive, and so much more. Their faith and hope in the Resurrection to come gave them the strength and the faith to endure their sufferings. This same strong faith and hope in their Resurrection and Transformation reveals itself in the following group of verses as well:

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:"
Romans 6:4-5, KJV

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
Philippians 3:21, KJV

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
1 John 3:2-3, KJV

"There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a

mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

1 Corinthians 15:40-52, KJV

As I mentioned earlier, the birth date of Jesus Christ has been shrouded in mystery for over two thousand years now. While some estimations have been made which range from 2 BC to 4 BC, no one knows with absolute certainty. Now while His birth is obviously very important, as we have seen, it is in fact Christ's Death and Resurrection which has changed the world and given us all hope for the past two thousand years. As I pondered this mystery regarding Jesus' date of birth, I came to consider the possibility that perhaps this mystery was intentionally created by God the Father, and maybe even nursed along by Joseph and Mary as well. While it is just a personal theory on my part, perhaps Joseph and Mary took the added precaution of concealing Jesus' date of birth in order to protect Him at a young age.

As I said, this is just something which I have personally considered. It is not an established doctrine. However, if we stop to consider all of the events which were occurring at that time in Israel, concealing the date of the Savior's birth does seem like something both reasonable and practical which Joseph and Mary might possibly have done. Following His birth, one of Jesus' first public appearances was when at the age of eight days old, He was taken to the temple in Jerusalem in order to be circumcised according to Jewish custom, as we see by the following group of verses:

"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

Luke 2:21-24, KJV

Following these events, and the prophecies which were given by Simeon and Anna, Luke informs us that Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned to Nazareth in Galilee where Jesus continued

to grow, as becomes evident by the following set of verses:

"And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

Luke 2:39-40, KJV

According to Luke's account, the next thing we learn is that the years passed, and that at the age of twelve, during one of their annual Passover pilgrimages to Jerusalem, the young boy Jesus remained behind, and began to teach in the temple, to the dismay of everyone around Him, as we see here:

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Luke 2:41-52, KJV

Following this account, Luke then fast-forwards approximately eighteen years to the revelation of John the Baptist who has begun preaching in the wilderness area of the Jordan River valley. As some of you will no doubt have already realized, a very important event is missing from Luke's account. I am of course referring to what happened not long after Jesus was born in Bethlehem. As we learned in part one, King Herod --

that is, Herod the Great, who expanded the rebuilt temple of Solomon -- was filled with great rage when the Magi failed to return to his court, because he was determined to kill the boy Jesus before He became a political threat to him. Thus, during the final years of his reign, King Herod ordered the cruel extermination of all children two years of age and under, as we can determine by the following set of verses:

"And when they [the Magi] were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not. But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene."
Matthew 2:13-23, KJV

It is at this point in the narration where Matthew also fast-forwards in time, and his account coincides with Luke's account regarding the ministry of John the Baptist. So what we see then is that shortly after His birth, Jesus was taken to Egypt by His parents in order to escape the wrath of King Herod the Great. Considering that this happened towards the end of Herod the Great's reign, it doesn't seem likely that they spent very many years in Egypt. In fact, in the previous

verses, Matthew describes Jesus as being a "young child" when they returned to Israel. But please notice that even though Herod the Great was now dead, Joseph was still concerned, and did not want to return to Judea, because Archelaus, who was one of the sons of King Herod, now ruled there. This then is how they came to be in Nazareth, and explains how each year they traveled from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. It also dovetails with Luke's account regarding how Jesus remained at the temple at the age of twelve during one of those pilgrimages from Nazareth.

One of the points I wish to make with all of these details, is that from the time that Jesus was born, He had enemies; both physical, earthly enemies -- such as the Herods -- as well as spiritual enemies, who were out for His blood. The Devil and his minions certainly knew who Jesus was. Going by the actions they took, and considering what they had already been through, I think it is safe to say that Joseph and Mary were also fully aware of the dangers which their son faced. That being the case, it makes perfect sense that they would be cautious upon returning to Israel. And, as I mentioned earlier, they might not have wanted to be too forthcoming regarding the exact age of their son, and when and where He was born. After all, the Herods were still in power, and would remain in power for many years to come, up until the first Jewish- Roman War of 66 AD to 73 AD. What if Archelaus had learned that his father's murderous scheme to kill his competition had failed? So due caution was in order for Joseph and Mary upon their return to Israel.

Looking at this issue from another angle, in addition to the potential threat which was posed by Herod's clan, I can see another possible reason why Joseph and Mary might be hesitant to return to Judea, and more specifically, to the town of Bethlehem. Consider all of the children who had been murdered in cold blood by Herod the Great; and yet Jesus had somehow survived that massacre. It makes me wonder how those other parents would have felt to know that Joseph and Mary's child survived, while theirs did not. How well would Joseph and Mary have been received there? Again, this is just personal speculation on my part, but I think it is something worth pondering.

As we all know, in later years, the fact that Jesus had His share of enemies became even more evident when He and His followers left northern Israel, and began to travel down towards Jerusalem. As I point out in a few other articles,

the people of Jerusalem -- and particularly the political and religious leadership there -- had a rather dim view of their Galilean brethren to the north, due to the bad history which existed between them. Not only did the northerners speak differently, but they were not highbred either. Thus, when rumors began to circulate regarding Jesus being the promised Messiah, it did not sit well with those pompous, stiff-collared rulers in Jerusalem. In fact, apparently, even some of the northerners looked down upon the people of Nazareth, even though they were both northerners. You may recall the following famous incident:

"And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see."
John 1:46, KJV

One thing which this current discussion establishes, is that there is substantial ambiguity concerning the early life of Jesus, prior to the beginning of His public ministry. We see a large gap from the time that He was a toddler until He was at the age of twelve, and then another large gap from the age of twelve until the age of thirty. While certain people have made some wild speculations regarding what happened in His life during these time frames, I think it is safer to adhere closer to the Scriptures, and simply accept that Jesus led a normal life in Nazareth -- probably helping His father with his carpentry work -- with perhaps some occasional preaching at the temple during their annual pilgrimages to Jerusalem. More than that is just too much speculation, in my view.

The precise date of Jesus' birth is clearly a part of this fuzzy historical picture as well. But as I noted earlier, this could all have been by God's design -- and perhaps even by the design of His parents -- in order to protect Him until the time of His revelation to Israel. We find a small hint in the Gospel of Luke which possibly reveals the ambiguity that surrounded Jesus' age during that time over two millennia ago. Consider what Luke wrote:

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,"
Luke 3:23, KJV

Being a physician, I suspect that Luke was probably a rather meticulous person when it came to recording specific facts and details. As you may know, it has been long-believed that

Luke was the author of both the Gospel of Luke, as well as the Book of Acts. This is because both Books are addressed to the same person -- that being Theophilus -- and also because the opening verse of the Book of Acts appears to pick up where the Gospel of Luke leaves off. Consider the following verses which validate this point:

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."

Luke 1:1-4, KJV

"The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me."

Acts 1:1-4, KJV

There is likewise evidence that Luke also had a hand in writing some of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, in addition to being his personal physician who accompanied Paul during his many travels throughout Israel and the Mediterranean region. He was also known as Lucas, which was a shortened form of the Latin "Lucanus". Consider the following verses:

"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you."

Colossians 4:14, KJV

"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

2 Timothy 4:11, KJV

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

Amen. [The second epistle to the Corinthians was written from Philippi, a city of Macedonia, by Titus and Lucas.]"

2 Corinthians 13:13, KJV

"Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."

Philemon 1:24, KJV

But going back to Luke 3:23, as I said, there is a hint that perhaps even Luke wasn't absolutely certain regarding Jesus' precise age when He began His public ministry. Let me share that verse with you again:

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,"

Luke 3:23, KJV

Regarding the phrase "as was supposed", I am not certain if those words were penned by Luke himself, or by some scribe at a later date for the sake of clarification. If the words were indeed written by Luke, then my current understanding is that his intended meaning is that while everyone supposed that Jesus was the biological son of Joseph, personally, Luke fully understood that Jesus was in reality the Son of God who was created in Mary's womb by way of the Holy Spirit. In fact, this is exactly what Luke tells us in the first chapter of his Gospel, as we see by the following verses:

"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Luke 1:34-35, KJV

You may also recall that in addressing Theophilus, Luke told him that he had a "perfect understanding" -- or an accurate understanding -- "of all things from the very first".

But it is the other part of the verse where Luke says that Jesus "began to be about thirty years of age" which caught my attention. Considering how detailed Luke is in all of his other writings, providing precise names, places, events, etc., was he just being a bit lazy here by saying "began to

be about"; or did he honestly not know the Lord's precise age at the time? I don't think it was laziness, because right after that, Luke provides a very detailed genealogy of the Lord's ancestors. One possibility is that Luke just didn't consider it important enough to be precise concerning the Lord's age. This would be in line with what I said earlier regarding the Apostles and Disciples viewing Jesus' Death and Resurrection as being more important than His physical age and the time of His birth. I do find it interesting that Luke is the only one of the four Gospel writers who even attempts to place an age on Jesus. That point itself could be making a statement to us.

Please go to part three for the conclusion of this series.

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THE MYSTERY OF JESUS' DATE OF BIRTH : PART 3

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Who May Have Been Aware Of Christ's Precise Date Of Birth?, Parent-To-Parent Discussion, Consequences Of Lying To Your Children, Biblical Admonitions Regarding Speaking The Truth, Reconciling Lying With the Scriptures, Our Children Are Like Sponges, We Reap What We Sow, Resist The Devil, Flee From The Works Of Darkness, Time For A Change, Tell Your Children The Truth, Abandon Christmas, Personal Choice, Be Persuaded In Your Own Mind, Closing Remarks, Suggested Reading List

Now, while I have stated that Christ's birth date has been shrouded in total mystery to our present day, at the same time, if we stop to consider how detailed the Jews were with regards to genealogical records and important dates, then it seems likely that at least some of Christ's First Century

followers may have known when Jesus was born. Naturally, the Lord's parents obviously knew. Whether or not they shared that information with the Apostles is unknown.

As we saw in part two, Luke appears to have remained in the dark regarding the Lord's date of birth. The fact that he writes "about thirty years of age" when discussing the time of Jesus' baptism by John suggests a few possibilities:

- Luke wasn't really sure of Jesus's exact day of birth.
- Luke wasn't really sure when Jesus was baptized by John.
- Luke possibly knew Jesus' year of birth but chose to not reveal it.

The reason why I emphasize this point is this. Even though Luke wrote about the baptism of Jesus Christ within thirty or forty years after the actual event had occurred, it seems that by that time, the birthdate of Jesus Christ may have already been obscured. Please note that some scholars believe that the Gospels were written considerably later than that. However, personally, I do not accept that view. I believe that they were written during the actual lifetimes of the First Century Apostles and Disciples.

Moving on, if the angels appeared on the very same night of Jesus' birth, then it also seems likely that the shepherds in the field knew the precise date as well. Not only that, but in the verses which follow, we are told that they broadcast the Good News and "made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." In other words, there were other people who were apparently aware of Jesus' date of birth as well. Allow me to share their complete story with you:

"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 Saviour, 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 at 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."

Luke 2:8-20, KJV

In part two of this series, I also briefly mentioned how in obedience to the Laws of Moses, Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to be circumcised. It was during that trip that they encountered both Simeon and Anna, who recognized Jesus as the promised Savior. So, being as circumcision was performed on the eighth day following a child's birth, we can deduce that Simeon and Anna may have known when Jesus was born as well.

The wise men -- or "magos" -- who traveled from the lands of the east, possibly from the land of the Chaldeans, likewise seem to have possibly known precisely when Jesus was born, even though they appear to have arrived two years after the young child's birth. Consider the following set of verses:

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Matthew 2:1-2, KJV

As I mentioned a minute ago, Jesus' mother, Mary, obviously knew when her son was born; but whether or not she told the Apostles is difficult to determine, because there appears to be no Scriptural evidence to support such a hypothesis. But if we consider that they took her in following the Death of her son, as had been commanded by Jesus as He hung dying on the Cross, that possibility does exist. Thus, we find Mary included in the Upper Room, in the opening chapter of the Book of Acts. Consider the following verses:

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

John 19:26-27, KJV

"Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

Acts 1:12-14, KJV

So based on the scant Scriptural evidence that we do have, it seems that there were at least some people who definitely knew, or who probably knew, Jesus's date of birth during that time. Yet as I already said, we find no record of them celebrating the Lord's birth anywhere in the New Testament. Not only that, but none of them reveal the precise date of Christ's birth. As I mentioned in part two, in my mind, the previous facts seem to make a statement; and that is that for whatever His reasons, God chose to purposely conceal from us the birth date of Jesus Christ.

Before concluding this series, allow me to speak to you parent-to-parent. First of all, if you are a Bible-believing Christian, I would like to ask you to please consider the potential damage you are doing to your children by convincing them to believe in Santa Claus. While it may seem innocuous enough while they are still young, you need to realize that someday, sooner or later, they are going to be smart enough to figure out that Santa is not real, and that you have been lying to them for years. Then what?

Now, for some of them, making this discovery may be no big deal, and they really won't care one way or the other. But for some other children, who knows? It could be emotionally devastating to learn that their parents have been lying to them for so long. At the very least, they may feel foolish for having believed you for as long as they did. Even worse, they may lose trust in your word altogether. For those kids

who do have a negative reaction upon realizing that Santa Claus is not real, how do you think they are going to react when you try to tell them about Jesus Christ? Do you think that they will be so quick to believe you after you've lied to them about Santa for so many years?

In case you are not aware of it, the Bible has a lot to say regarding speaking the truth, and speaking the truth in love. One thing I know for certain is that nowhere in the Bible are we instructed to tell a lie in order to preach the truth. Consider the following sample verses:

"Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things. For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge."

Proverbs 8:6-9, KJV

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

1 Timothy 2:7, KJV

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ . . . Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another."

Ephesians 4:15, 25, KJV

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, KJV

"These are the things that ye shall do; Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD."

Zechariah 8:16-17, KJV

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

John 4:24, KJV

In light of the previous verses, how do you as a Christian parent reconcile telling your children that Jesus was born on December 25th when you know in your heart that He really wasn't? How do you reconcile convincing them to believe in Santa Claus when you know that he is purely a fantasy? You obviously can't.

Directly related to the above is the following question. How can you honestly expect your children to tell you the truth when you have not always told them the truth? We all know that our children are like little sponges. They absorb just about everything, both the good and the bad. They constantly watch us and learn from us, even from a very young age. The Bible also teaches us that we reap what we sow. So what are you sowing in the lives of your children? Are you really setting a good example when you intentionally deceive them in regards to Christmas and Santa Claus?

You know, if you really stop to think about it, saying that it is okay to worship Jesus during Christmas time while at the same time you promote Santa Claus, is not much different from saying that it is okay to worship God and the Golden Calf, or God and Molech, or God and Ishtar, or God and Baal, or God and Satan. The point is, you just cannot do both. You need to make up your mind. As the Apostle James wrote, you cannot be double minded about it. You cannot mix the Light with darkness. The Scriptures in fact instruct us to resist the Devil, and to flee from the works of darkness, and to have no part in them, and to walk in the light of the truth of Jesus Christ, as we see by the following group of verses:

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

James 4:7, KJV

"Neither give place to the devil."

Ephesians 4:27, KJV

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

John 3:19-20, KJV

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"

Isaiah 5:20, KJV

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Romans 13:12, KJV

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

2 Corinthians 4:6, KJV

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

2 Corinthians 6:14, KJV

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

Ephesians 5:8, 11, KJV

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"

Colossians 1:13, KJV

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:"

1 John 1:6, KJV

So perhaps it is time for a change. Perhaps you can start by being honest with your children, by telling them that Santa Claus is not real. Explain to them that you are the one who provides the presents for them because you love them. Then, maybe slowly, over time, you can wean them from celebrating Christmas altogether. Even better still, if you truly love your children, then tell them about Jesus Christ and His precious Gift of Eternal Life. Someday they will thank you for telling them the truth.

In conclusion, I realize that despite everything I have shared in this series, some of my Christian friends won't be swayed from their current position. They will continue to

celebrate each and every Christmas, and justify it, probably using some of the very excuses we have already covered in this series. They will continue to stress how important it is to celebrate Jesus' birth at this time of year, even while fully knowing that the Lord was not born on December 25th. Some of them will in all likelihood, even continue to promote the false commercial god -- Santa Claus -- with their young children. In short, these Christian parents will continue to perpetuate the very same lies which the Catholic Church has perpetuated for the past sixteen hundred years. They will continue to walk in spiritual darkness by their own choice, and they will lead their children down the same dark path of misguided human traditions which are based on lies. They will remain in bondage to the ways of the world.

While I may not agree with their position, or they with mine -- they will probably view me as being a legalist -- at least I have told them the truth as I understand it; and that is what matters most to me. Of course, I recognize their right to make their own choice, and to believe and practice their faith as they each feel is appropriate. That is something which can't be taken from any of them. As the Apostle Paul so wisely wrote in his Epistle to the Roman brethren regarding the observance and keeping of holy days and Jewish dietary laws:

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind . . . Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

Romans 14:5, 22, KJV

Of course, I should point out that in those verses, Paul is referring to the holy days which were established by the Lord in the Old Testament for the Jews; my emphasis being on the words "by the Lord". In contrast, as we have already seen, we find no such Divine Mandate to celebrate Christmas in the New Testament. What we are constantly told to do is to remember the Death and Resurrection of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ, because that is where our hope lies. In my view, the absence in the Scriptures of any verses telling us clearly to celebrate the Lord's birth makes a very clear statement for those of us who can receive it. Do you?

With these thoughts I will bring this series to a close. I hope that you have found it informative, and I pray that it

has been a blessing and an inspiration in your life. If you have enjoyed reading this series, please consider sharing its URL with your online friends. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would also appreciate if you would take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this series, or which contain topics which are related to this series, and which are likewise located on this very same Bill's Bible Basics website:

Birth of Jesus and the Star of Bethlehem

Happy Hanukkah and Merry Christmas?

Celebrating National Holidays

Dear Teacher: Standing Up for Our Children's Rights

Christmas: Its Pagan Origin

Halloween and Samhain : No Room For Compromise

Our Pagan World: The Easter Myth Exposed!

Are Christians Obligated to Keep the Sabbath?

A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: God's Promise of the Spirit

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