



The Real Christmas Story



By Dr. David Schnittger

As we approach the season when Christmas is traditionally celebrated in America, I thought it appropriate to deal with two subjects: The time of Christ's birth and the prophetic significance of Christ's birth. A contemplation of these important issues will enhance our worship of the Savior!

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

There are lines of biblical evidence from the Old Testament as well as the Gospel of Luke that, when followed closely, pinpoint the probable date of the conception and birth of Jesus Christ.

1. The Priestly Division of Abijah (Luke 1:5)

Abijah was one of the 24 courses in the yearly schedule of priestly ministry in Israel (1 Chronicles 24:7-19). Each division occurred twice in the year. Think of it as similar to an usher's schedule in a

local church. Each division changed every week, beginning with each sabbath. The first course commenced on the 22nd of Tisri - October 6. Tisri was the first month of the civil year. Tisri began on the eighth and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles and was a sabbath.

The Priestly division of Abijah was the eighth division (1 Chronicles 24:10). The first administration of the eighth division would therefore fall upon the 12th-18th of Chisleu (December 6-12). The second administration of the eighth division would fall upon the 12th-18th of Silvan (June 13-19). You may be asking why the dates of the division of Abijah has any relevance in terms of the dating of the birth of Christ. It is because the "course of Abijah" is mentioned in the Christmas story.

2. The Conception of John the Baptist:

We read in Luke 1:5, "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the **course of Abia** (Abijah) . . ." In the verses to follow we learn that Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, was fulfilling his priestly duty in the Temple (during the course of Abijah), when an angel announced to him the conception of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-13). This announcement probably took place between the 12th-18th of Sivan (June 13-19), in the year 5 B.C. Observe carefully the record of Luke 1:23, 24a "And it came to pass, that, as the days of his ministrations (the course of Abija) were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived . . ." After finishing his priestly service (June 13-19), he departed to his own house which was in a city in the hill country of Judah (Lk 1:34).

Since the day following his course was a sabbath (Sivan 19 = June 20), he would naturally not be able to leave Jerusalem until the following day (Sivan 20 = June 21). Since he as an old man traveling on foot the thirty or so miles to his home would probably take at least two days. He would, therefore, arrive at home on the night of Sivan 21 (June 22). If we allow him one day of rest (Sivan 22 = June 23), the conception of John the Baptist could possibly have occurred on the 23rd of Sivan = **June 24, 5 B.C.**

3. The Conception of Jesus

Luke records the conception of cousin Jesus to be six months after the conception of John the Baptist (1:26, 36). It is therefore only a matter of simple calculation to arrive at the 1st of Tebeth = **December 25, 5 B.C.** as the likely date of Christ's conception. Note also that John the Baptist was born exactly three months after the conception of Jesus (Lk 1:56, 57) on the 7th of Nisan = **March 28, 4 B.C.**, and the birth of the Lord Jesus was six months later, on the 15th of Nisri = **September 29, 4 B.C.**¹

¹ The monk who started keeping time relative to Christ's birth made a mistake in his calculations. This threw the calendar off by four years.



4. The Feast of the Archangel

It is interesting that within the Roman Catholic tradition *The Feast of the Archangel Michael* is celebrated on September 29:

“The feast of the Archangel Michael, the leader of the hosts of angels (is) . . . on the 29th of September. This owes its origin to some miraculous appearances of Michael in Catholic legends.”²

No one seems to know just why this date was chosen. Could it be that Michael was the “angel of the Lord” that made the announcement to the shepherds on September 29, 4 B.C. (Luke 2:9-14)?

5. Conclusion

Should this line of biblical reasoning be persuasive, this is certainly no cause to have qualms about celebrating Christmas on December 25. Quite on the contrary, it is a time to worship in spirit and in truth for the miraculous conception of our Lord on December 25, which led to His subsequent birth on September 29.

That December the 25th was a pagan festival long before the time of the Nativity is not in doubt. Not only so, but when Constantine by his edict of Milan made it fashionable to be a so-called Christian, the pagans responded. Gradually the true meaning of December the 25th was subverted and replaced by the birthday of a false god - Horus (Osiris) of Egypt.³

This information may actually help to dispel the “heresy doubts” of Christians who sincerely refuse to have any part in Christmas because of the stain connected with pagan deities in their relationship to that holiday. In other words, this information puts to rest the charade of the enemy and brings to the forefront the true significance of December 25th.

Please observe how His conception and His birth are both identified in John’s Gospel, “The Word became flesh” on the 25th of December, 5 B.C. and “Tabernacled (dwelt) with us” on the 29th of September, 4 B.C. (John 1:14).

² Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3, p 444.

³ Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, Vol. 3

Summary Chart:

June 13-19, 5 BC	The Announcement to Zechariah (Lk 1:11-13)
June 24, 5 BC	The conception of John the Baptist (Lk 1:23,24)
December 25, 5 BC	The conception of Jesus (Lk 1:26, 36)
March 28, 4 BC	The birth of John The Baptist (Lk 1:56, 57)
September 29, 4 BC	The birth of Jesus Christ (Lk 2:1-20)

THE ENDLESS CIRCLE

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.” - Ecclesiastes 1:9.

Just as the earth always turns round and round like an endless circle, so is the repetitive nature of human history. The Bible reveals it, history confirms it, and modern man echoes it in his own words: “The more things change, the more things remain the same.”

This is particularly true as it relates to the Christmas story. The historical events, the political landscape, their prophetic significance, the hopes, the fears, and ambitions which were prevalent in the affairs of men and nations at the time when Christ.

As we are in the last days of the church age, and the Second Coming of Christ draws nigh, at no time in history has there been a return of so many parallel things as there are at the present. “Time,” prophetic-wise, has traversed the full circle, so that things and plans, are *now* as they were *then*.

A comparison of “then” and “now” in the context of like-truths and some things which differ, can best be served, by two methods of investigation, One, the broader view called, “The Telescopic.” The other, a more detailed approach we call, “The Microscopic.”

The Telescopic

“Then” Israel was back in the land of Palestine, subject to Roman rule. “Now” they are back in the land, regathered from around the world, a sovereign state since 1948. “Then” their presence in the land was in order that God might faithfully fulfill all that prophecy had to say about the suffering Messiah, and the blessings for Israel. “Now” they are back in the land in order that God’s faithfulness might be manifest in the glorified Messiah and all that this embraces. “Then” the nation had returned from the Babylonian captivity (536 B.C.). “Now” they have returned for the second time, from the dispersion which occurred when Jerusalem was overrun (70 A.D.).

“Then” the Roman dictatorship was moving towards man’s attempt at homogeny (world government). “Now” through many agencies the nations of earth are moving toward another attempt at homogeny - the elitist’s long awaited *New World Order*.

Then Roman Empire’s strategy for homogeny included *pax romana*, the Roman “peace”, the direct tax, confiscation of property and rule by imperial edict.



“Now” the nations of earth, increasingly under U.N. and W.H.O. control, rules through “covidland” protocols, mandatory lockdowns, mandatory masking, mandatory vaccines and mandatory vaccine passports. The elites and their bumbling puppets are increasingly “impatient” for our compliance. Their patience is wearing thin, as they cajole, harass, intimidate, threaten and punish those who resist the deadly Covid-19 clot shot. They are giving you two choices: either die from the clot shot or die of starvation. Imposition and compliance are their operational methods on the path to tyranny - and extermination

“Then” the Roman Republic had been replaced by a Roman Empire. “Now” the United States has gradually transitioned from a Constitutional Republic to a Federal dictatorship.

The false peace of the first century was a manifestation of man’s surrender to evil and destruction. Its counterpart in the 21st century is the siren call of “peace and safety, then sudden destruction” (1 Thessalonians 5:13).

The Microscopic

The counterfeit world government which Caesar was moving toward when Christ was born has long since passed into the dust of time. Others in the meantime have had similar plans. Napoleon had his dream of world empire; Hitler’s fancy was the master race; Marx’s class (and race) struggle still goes on today. The combined efforts of the major powers all speak of peace in our time, a peace not unlike the peace which was forced upon the civilized world when Christ was here in the flesh - a peace at the price of freedom.

Whether that “peace” flies the flag of “the green new deal” or “the global reset” or “Agenda 2030,” the bottom line for the serfs is “you will have nothing and you will love it.” The plans for the “worthless eaters” in the New World Order are to “sit down, shut up and take your shot.”

While our extermination is going operational, the elites continue to opine about human rights, diversity, equality and inclusion. You see, the more things change, the more things remain the same. As it was in the days of Caesar, so it is now, for there is no new thing under the sun.

At the first coming of Christ, the powers that be did everything they could to prevent Christ's emergence on the world scene, even at the cost of every male toddler's life in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16). Likewise, the New World Order is doing all it can to oppose and exterminate those who are looking for the Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 11:18).

A distinctive feature of our time manifests itself in man's attempt at homogeneity, which will in the future meet with a measure of temporary success, at least outwardly, for approximately seven years (Revelation 13:1-18). This will be a time when all commerce and trade will be controlled by the whims of the world dictator, the Antichrist (Revelation 13:16, 17). All of this tyranny seems to be foreshadowed by the emerging "vaccine passports" which are being rolled out across the globe.

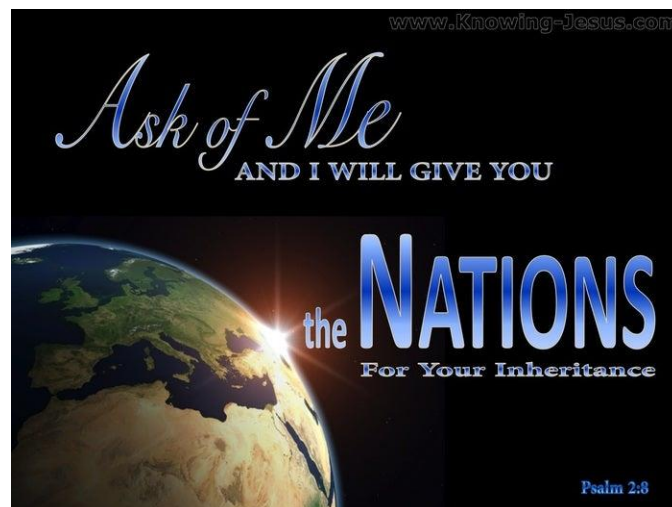
Finally, the counterfeit homogeneity of seven years will be destroyed in the brightness of our Lord's coming to earth (Revelation 19:11-21). Simultaneously, He will establish the true homogeneity, 1,000 years of peace.

The apostate condition of Israel (nationally) remains constant. In like manner, both the past and the present, their regathering back in the land of Palestine speaks of continuing prophetic possibility - namely, the millennial kingdom which Christ offered to the nation at His first coming (Matthew 4:17; Luke 1:32, 33).

Prophecy concerning Israel speaks of two recoveries and no more: "And it shall come to pass, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people" (Isaiah 11:11). It follows that their presence back in the land at this time speaks of imminent fulfillment: First, the false homogeneity, which the Lord will destroy with the brightness of His coming (2 Thessalonians 2:8). Second Israel's national conversion (Zechariah 12:10-14; 14:1-21) and third the establishment of the true homogeneity - the millennial kingdom.

In the meantime, between now and the consummation of this dispensation Scripture has much to say about Israel. They are joined with the major powers in the drama of prophetic fulfillment. This was true at the first advent and is even more so today.

It is worth noting that the timing of the first advent of Christ was foreordained and unstoppable, even by the mighty Roman empire. Galatians 4:4 informs us, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Likewise, all the schemes of current world leaders and their demonic overlords are powerless to effect, even to the slightest degree, the timing of Christ's Second Coming.



Psalm 2:1-12 lays out so well the current rebellion and its futility against the almighty power of Jehovah and His Son:

“Why do the heathen rage (assemble in tumult), and the people (the Jews) imagine a vain (or hopeless) thing? The kings of the earth set themselves (take their stand), and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh (the death rattle, not a laughter of mirth) the LORD shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king (Jesus Christ) upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Bless are all they that put their trust in him (Christ).”

“Then,” (at the time of Christ’s first advent, and particularly the trial and crucifixion), the nations (symbolically, the Roman government) and the people (Israel) sought in vain to sever the authority of heaven (cf. Acts 4:25, 26). “Now,” once again as we close out this present dispensation prophecy has traversed the full circle. The nations of earth, right along with the Jews, are moving toward the false homogeny. The globalist energies (best expressed through the United Nations, the World Bank, Davos, Bilderberg, etc.) will conclude in utter chaos (1 Thessalonians 2:13; Revelation 20:1-3).

The major difference between “Then” and “Now” unfolds in Israel’s final reaction. “Then” they rejected their Messiah and the kingdom He offered stating, “We have no king but Caesar.” “Now”, in the near future, but after much sifting they will receive the Christ as Lord and Savior, “. . . they shall look upon me who they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son . . .” (Zechariah 12:10). Following their national conversion, the true homogeny (the millennium) which was placed in abeyance when Jerusalem was destroyed (70 A.D.), shall be established (Zechariah 14:1-21).

The journey from “Then” until “Now” has taken a long time, and the dark days or God’s wrath are but a short distance away. The ominous clouds which speak of the Day of the Lord are manifest on every horizon. Hence the reader, like the writer, needs to be more than just academic.



The echo of the Christmas herald still fills the air, for it timeless: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14). Obviously, that peace must involve the Prince of Peace, for it is written, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:5).

Strange, isn't it? The more things change the more things remain the same - HEAR ye Him!

This article was adapted from *The Real Christmas Story*, C.E. McLain, Southwest Radio Church, 1974.

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