

WHY DIDN'T GOD LET US KNOW THE DATE OF JESUS' DESCENT TO EARTH?

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Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together *she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.*

And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save people from their sins."

Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

Matthew 2:1-20

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem was with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born.

And they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, 'and you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called the magi, and ascertained from them the time the star appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make careful search for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, that I too may come and worship Him."

And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo, the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them, until it came and stood over where the Child was.

And when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. and they came into the house and saw the Child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshipped Him; and opening their treasures they presented to Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed for their own country by another way.

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "arise and take the Child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search the Child to destroy Him."

And he arose and took the Child and His mother by night, and departed for Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod, that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "Out of Egypt did I call My Son."

Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its environs, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the magi.

Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled saying, "A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream, to Joseph, saying, " arise and take the child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child's life are dead."

Luke 2:1-20

Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

In order to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.

And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people;

For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

"And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."

And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

And it came about when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to one another, "Go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

After reading the earthly birth history of the Lord Jesus that was recorded in Matthew & Luke, we are surprised to find that God left out a very important fact: the earthly 'birthdate' of our Lord, even though the Lord Jesus' earthly birth history was described in tremendous detail. The book of Luke recorded the Lord's earthly birth place in a narrative. Luke recorded the name of the city and specifically where it took place, an inn. The Child was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Also, Luke recorded the talks of the angels to the shepherds about the good tidings of great joy, the praising of the angels, how the shepherds went forth to seek for the Lord, and how the shepherds spread the news.

In Matthew, besides what is mentioned above, the details were recorded of the wise men who came from the east to worship Jesus, how King Herod and the City of Jerusalem were troubled, how Herod asked the wise men about the newborn King, how Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem and what gifts the wise men brought to the Lord. Thereafter, it was recorded that the wise men returned to their own country another way and that Herod ordered the killing of all male children in Bethlehem two years old and under, how Jesus was led to Egypt, then returned, and how he went forth to Nazareth.

How was it possible that the birthdate was left out? Maybe Luke and Matthew were careless, but why did God not remind them to record the date? If Matthew or Luke wrote one more sentence, recording the earthly birthdate of the Lord, then today we could freely and truly celebrate His birth.

Many people react with surprise from what I say. They ask "What? We all know Jesus was born on December 25. Every year, we happily celebrate His birth on this date. Why do you say we don't know His birthday?"

Every year on December 25, many Christians, churches, and even non-Christians happily celebrate Christmas. But how many truly know the origin of Christmas? Which book in the Bible records that the Saviour was born on December 25th? There is no word that records the date of the earthly birth of the Saviour. One may ask, "Is there

any such recording in history?" The answer is that we cannot find the birthdate of the Saviour in any history book.

December 25th was identified as Christmas starting after the 4th century. A Roman emperor, Constantine (A.D. 280-337), claimed that he had accepted the Lord. Since then, the expansion of Christianity has been unusually rapid, and many rituals, 'sacred' dates and idolatrous traditions have entered into Christianity and churches. Christmas was one of the products from that period. It was also a frightening downfall for the church.

Many Christian leaders know that December 25th was a day established by man, but they keep silent. I do not know about other countries, but in China, many Christians believe that December 25th is the true birthdate of Christ.

One may say, even though the specific date of the Saviour's birth was not known, there should be a date for His earthly birth! What is wrong with an assumptive day to remember His birth? This question may have some logic behind it. We should let people know that December 25th was an assumed date. The truth should not be hidden when saying December 25th was the earthly birthday of Jesus Christ. Why mislead others to take December 25th as the earthly birthdate of Christ?

In fact, many Christians are excited about Christmas because they believe December 25th is the earthly birthdate of Christ. If they had understood that December 25th was just a man-made date and not the true birthdate of the Lord, they may not be as excited. They may even stop celebrating Christmas because of the truth.

From my childhood until my 20th winter, I was cheated in this matter. I believed that Jesus was born on December 25th. 90% of the people I knew believed the same thing. When I was 21, I understood that Christmas was not the true birthdate of Christ. Immediately, I felt that regardless of any matter, I should make a very clear separation between truth and false teaching. I should follow the truth and follow it diligently. Since then, I have stopped celebrating Christmas.

A similar matter is the images of the Lord Jesus. I had treasured several pictures of the Lord's image hanging on my walls. One time, God enlightened me, were these the real images of the Lord? We knew when the Lord was on earth, there were no cameras, nor were there any portraits of Him. How did this image come about? The artists pictured many images of our Lord according to their thoughts. Can these be the Lord's image? If there is a real image of our Lord, I would like to have one. Obviously, these images are man-created. From that time on, I did not want to hang any picture of the 'Lord's image'.

We should have a correct attitude. For the truth, we want to pursue it and obey it. If it is false teaching, we should keep ourselves away from it. The God we serve is a God that hates lies. We who belong to Him should have the same attitude.

December 25th is Christmas for some people, January 6th is Christmas for others. The Roman Catholic Church has Christmas on December 25th. The Greek Orthodox Church has Christmas on January 6th. The reformed Church has filtered many Roman Catholic traditions, but still keeps some traditions, December 25th as Christmas was one of them.

Let us ask the important question, why did God not let us know the birthdate of Christ? If He had let us know the date, then we could remember His birth and celebrate. We don't have to follow the false tradition. If God lets us know the date, then Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodox cannot make up such baseless traditions. Isn't it less trouble? Since the date is the most important issue of Christ's birth history, how can it be unmentioned in the Bible? When a person's birth is mentioned, we can skip the birth place, the environment, the visitors of the baby and the gifts the baby received, but we cannot skip the date!

Matthew & Luke recorded all details, but totally left out the most important fact, the date! Seems like it was totally forgotten! There was not one word mentioned! Isn't this strange? Men may forget to record, but how can God forget it? Shouldn't God have reminded the recorders of this? This question really puzzles us.

If we read His Word more carefully, this is not strange at all. The Almighty, Wise God cannot be wrong. He did not let us know the birthdate of Christ; He must have had His good reasons. If we humble down to read the Bible, it is not hard to see why God did not tell us the birthday of Christ. If we ask, in what century was Christ was born? Many will say, He was born more than 1900 years ago. Is this true? If Christ was truly born more than 1900 years ago, how do we explain the following passages?

John 1:1-12

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it.

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John.

He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.

John 1:18

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 17:5

"And now glorify thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I ever had with Thee before the world was."

John 8:58

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Colossians 1:15

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation.

Also, in the Bible, God told us that our Lord was working with Him when the heaven and earth were created.

John 1:3

All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:10

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

1 Corinthians 8:5-6

For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords,

yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

Colossians 1:16

For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

From these passages, we know that the Lord was with God from the beginning. He is God's only Son. He is in glory with God before the foundation of the earth. He is first, before all creation. All was made by Him. If we carefully meditate on these verses, can we say that Christ was born more than 1900 years ago? We cannot because Christ existed; He has been with God since the beginning of time. All things have been created by Him.

Some may say that Jesus was born more than 1900 years ago through virgin Mary. We can say that looking at Christ the man. In truth, we cannot agree. We know that the earthly birth of the Lord Jesus is different from anyone else's.

In fact, His birth was not a "birth", but a putting on of a flesh. In Hebrews 10:5-7, "Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin, you had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold, I have done, in the volume of the book it is written of Me--to do your will, O God.'" This passage clearly states that God prepared a body for the Son. With the body, He came into the world to do God's will and accomplish the work of redemption. From the beginning, there was Christ. Before the foundation of the world, He was with the Father. Because of salvation, He was sent by the Father through virgin Mary to become man. Therefore, we can not say that Christ was born more than 1900 years ago. We can only say that more than 1900 years ago, He came to the earth as man. The day virgin Mary gave birth to Him through the Holy Spirit was not His birthdate; it was the day He became a man. Everyone comes into existence by birth. But Christ existed much before His earthly birth. He existed before virgin Mary conceived Him through the Holy Spirit. He existed before Isaiah prophesied. The Lord told the Jews, "before Abraham was born, I am." Before Abraham, He was. Before the foundation of the world, He was. How can we say such a date was the Lord's earthly birthdate? Even if we know the specific date of His earthly birth, we cannot say that that day is Jesus' birthdate; we can not treat His birthdate as other's birthdates. Besides, we do not really know the true earthly birthdate of Jesus.

God knew men liked to celebrate birthdays: birthdays for oneself, birthdays for parents, birthdays for children, birthdays for husband, birthdays for wife, birthdays for friends, birthdays for admirers, and birthdays for loved ones. Likewise, birthdays for idols. When men celebrate idols' birthdays, they have feasts and big celebrations, just like man's birthdays. God knows that if He lets us know the earthly birthday of Jesus Christ, then there will be many worldly rituals, fleshly fulfillment and traditions for it. Therefore, man will treat the Lord Jesus as the other idols and His birthday as an idol's birthday. God did not let us know the earthly birthdate of Jesus, so that logically, problems can be avoided. But man just made up a date for Christ's birthday. The Roman Catholics use December 25th. Greek Orthodox use January 6th. At first, men recognized these dates as man-made birthdates for Christ. As time went by, December 25th & January 6th became 'real birthdates' for Christ. The ones do not know the truth take Christmas as the birthday of Jesus. The ones who do know the facts do not bother to explain the truth. Therefore, Christmas become real in the world of void.

What is the result of Christmas? More business, more parties, more drunks, more blemish to God's name, more short changes for the Christians' spirit and more reasons for ungodly lust. The ones who are against Jesus reveal their contradiction, for they celebrate Christmas but are against Christ. These are the products of the man-made Christmas. Every year, around Christmastime, we see and we hear countless tragic situations. Indeed, it is not surprising. God did not let us know the earthly birthdate of Jesus, but man rebelled against God's will and made up 'Christmas'. How can this 'date' not cause sorrow?

One may say, "Why do you just think about the bleak side? There are many Christians who also do good deeds on Christmas! The poor receive gifts and help." That is true, but can't have good deeds besides December 25th? There are 365 days in a year, and regardless of any season, we should help the poor. If there is only one day, Christmas, to help the poor, I am afraid the poor will suffer and have a long wait.

Very strangely, many ungodly men they celebrate Christmas for their lust, but there are also godly men who celebrate Christmas. They know Christ was not born on December 25th: it was passed down by the Roman Catholic tradition, but they continue to celebrate Christmas. Their ground is 'even we don't know which day Christ was born on earth, we believe there must be a date. Since the whole world is celebrating His birth on December 25th, why not celebrate with them?'

I love these people. I don't want to make any criticism. I truly hope they will carefully read God's word and put down the traditions and put down their favoritism. Ask God to enlighten us, to see whether we should celebrate Christmas. If you have done all these things and you still feel you should celebrate Christmas, then go ahead and celebrate. If you are willing to lay down man's traditions, forget man's favoritism, humbly obey God, and not confirm to this world, then I believe you do not want to celebrate Christmas next year.

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