

JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT BORN ON DECEMBER 25TH

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History convincingly shows that Dec. 25 was popularized as the date for Christmas, not because Christ was born on that day but because it was already popular in pagan religious celebrations as the birthday of the sun. But is it possible that Dec. 25 could be the day of Christ's birth?

No! Since there are no scriptural pointers to Jesus's birthday, early Christian teachers suggested dates all over the calendar. A careful analysis of Scripture, however, clearly indicates that Dec. 25 is an unlikely date for Christ's birth. Here are two primary reasons:

First, we know that shepherds were in the fields watching their flocks at the time of Jesus' birth (**Luke 2:7-8**). Shepherds were not in the fields during December. According to *Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays*, Luke's account "suggests that Jesus may have been born in summer or early fall. Since December is cold and rainy in Judea, it is likely the shepherds would have sought shelter for their flocks at night" (p. 309).

Similarly, *The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary* says this passage argues "against the birth of Christ occurring on Dec. 25 since the weather would not have permitted" shepherds watching over their flocks in the fields at night.

Second, Jesus' parents came to Bethlehem to register in a Roman census (**Luke 2:1-4**). Such censuses were not taken in winter, when temperatures often dropped below freezing and roads were in poor condition. Taking a census under such conditions would have been self-defeating.

Given the difficulties and the desire to bring pagans into Christianity, "the important fact then . . . to get clearly into your head is that the fixing of the date as December 25th was a compromise with paganism" (**William Walsh, *The Story of Santa Klaus*, 1970, p. 62**).

If Jesus Christ wasn't born on Dec. 25, does the Bible indicate when He was born? The biblical accounts point to the fall of the year as the most likely time of Jesus' birth, based on the conception and birth of John the Baptist.

Since Elizabeth who was John's mother was in her sixth month of pregnancy when Jesus was conceived (**Luke 1:24-36**), we can determine the approximate time of year Jesus was born if we know when John was born. John's father, Zacharias, was a priest serving in the Jerusalem temple during the course of Abijah (**Luke 1:5**). Historical calculations indicate this course of service corresponded to June 13-19 in that year (***The Companion Bible*, 1974, Appendix 179, p. 200**).

It was during this time of temple service that Zacharias learned that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a child (**Luke 1:8-13**). After he completed his service and traveled home, Elizabeth conceived (**verses 23-24**). Assuming John's conception took place near the end of June, adding nine months brings us to the end of March as the most likely time for John's birth.



Adding another six months the difference in ages between John and Jesus brings us to the end of September as the likely time of Jesus' birth.

Since Christ has nothing to do with the festivities of the 25th and it is truly a magical time of celebration, good cheer and good will for everyone the best we can do is to completely remove Christ from Christmas!

SOURCE: GOOD NEWS