

Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ

Birth: Jesus

Last time...the birth of “the voice crying in the wilderness preparing the way for the Messiah

This time...the time has come for the Seed of the Woman (Gen 3) to come forth.

4000 years after He promised a Savior to Adam and Eve, God made good His Word

Gal 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

In what season of the year did the “fullness of the time” of the Messiah happen?

1. Jesus started His ministry when He was 30 years old (Luke 3:23)
His ministry lasted 3½ years...42 months
He fulfilled the Feast of Passover on the Cross (Spring)
Therefore He started His ministry in the Fall...on His birthday?

John was 6 months older than Jesus

Jesus died near John’s 34th birthday

The Feasts of the Lord are the Lord Jesus’ appointment calendar

He fulfilled the Spring feasts in His first coming

The Church was born on the “middle” feast

He will fulfill the Fall feasts at His 2nd coming...near/on His birthday?

2. Courses...

- Sequence of the 24 courses/divisions of Levites serving in the Temple established by David
1 Chron 24:1-4
- Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, was in the 8th course
1 Chron 24:10
Luke 1:5
- When the Temple was destroyed on Aug 5, 70 AD, the 1st course of priests had just taken office
- Tracing backward, the 8th course of priests would have ended their duties on July 13, 3 BC
- John was born approx 280 days (40+7) later on April 19 or 20, 2 BC
- Jesus was born 6 months later...in the fall...Tishri 1, Rosh Hashanah, Feast of Trumpets
Lev 23:24
Num 29:1

The date of the birth of Jesus can and is disputed...

Christianity compromised with the pagans regarding Dec 25...

but the birth of the Messiah cannot be disputed – world has never been the same.

Jews and Jesus...what kind of a Messiah were the Jews looking for in “the fullness of the time”?

- Rabbis believed all the prophets prophesied of the Messiah...but
- Rabbis believed not
 - in “original sin” (sin nature transmitted by Adam/Eve) or the fall of man
 - man is both good and evil, as created by God (God Creator of evil)
 - evil resulted in sin and death...and God repented (no foresight)
 - i.e. God is partly to blame for sin and death
 - man is born alive but dies of his own sin, not Adam’s
 - man has the ability to overcome evil/sin with study and good works
 - i.e. no need for a Deliverer from sin and faith in Him
 - Messiah does not have a priestly office, a Kingly office only
 - The Word of God (OT) was the possession of the whole world...
 - its promises were for Jews only
 - Jesus stepped over the line
 - Luke 4:24-30 widows during Elijah, lepers during Elisha
- Rabbis taught that the Messiah
 - character, derision, and suffering would mirror that of his people (Israel)
 - be opposed by the Gentiles
 - would die for his people (Is 53)
 - save Israel from the Gentiles...save Israel only...
 - a work of deliverance like Moses’...“hyper-Moses”, an intensified Moses
 - reconcile God and Israel in his kingdom
 - would deliver and restore the national glory to Israel
 - i.e. national glory more important than the Messiah
 - i.e. the Messiah as the Lord’s instrument of exalting Israel, not the Savior of the world (Jews and Gentiles), not a light to the Gentiles in the “salvation” sense
- Rabbis acknowledged the fulfillment of certain prophetic Scriptures by Jesus of Nazareth (as they called Him along with “Rabbi”) but Jesus of Nazareth repeatedly “stepped over the line” by declaring His Deity

- The Jews had a radically different belief about the nature of the Messiah (The Prophet foretold by Moses in Deut 18:15-19)
 - existed
 - in the presence of God long before his manifestation
 - before the moon and sun, perhaps was even eternal
 - was pre-eminent above Moses and the angels
 - will subdue Satan and cast him into hell
 - although far above an ordinary man, he would not be Divine
 - God become a man, the Messiah 100% God and 100% man:
absurd and blasphemous
 - qualified to be God's King (Ps 2) from the house of David
 - righteous
 - taught of and blessed of God
 - pure of sin
 - would not fail because the Lord chose him to reign and blessing of the Lord was upon Him (God cannot fail)...not invincible but the Lord his God is
 - would triumph speedily over the Gentiles and re-establish the kingdom of Israel and the throne of David...
 - than that of which Jesus spoke regarding Himself...He stepped over the line
 - John 5:17-18 "My Father"...make yourself equal with God
 - John 8:58-59 Before Abraham was, I AM

Therefore the Rabbis (religious leaders) and Jesus were contrary one to the other

- Jesus confronted the "Jews"
 - The "Jews" were antagonistic toward Jesus...culminating at the Cross
- the timing of the Messiah's coming depended on the mercy of God, NOT their repentance
 - After the Diaspora, when it was apparent that the Messiah was not going to deliver them from Rome and set up his kingdom, Rabbinic writings speak of 5 Gentile kingdoms under which Israel would suffer
 - Babylon
 - Medo-Persia
 - Greece
 - Rome
 - Ishmael...sons of Kedar, Islam (7th century)
 - During the 5th Gentile kingdom God would hear His people and the Messiah would come during the war of Rome vs Ishmael
 - West vs East
 - ISIS vs the Jews and "the people of the Cross"

Note: Confusion regarding the number of the Messiah's comings

At the risk of stating the obvious...Jesus was

- very contrary to, separated from, opposed by
 - the “Jews”
 - the ideas of the Messiah of His time...
- rejected and hated by the national religious leaders (the “Jews”)

During His ministry, there was much

- division about Jesus
 - His identity
 - His radical teaching
- confusion due to the
 - pre-conceived notions/ideas of the Rabbis
 - traditions of man that made of none effect the Word of God
 - general ignorance of the Word of God

When it comes to Jesus Christ, those things...division and confusion...remain to this day for the same reasons as 2000 years ago

But we know God’s Plan for the Messiah
Hebrews 10:1-20

The Law (context: priesthood, sacrifices, way of salvation) was a shadow/image of good things to come

The sin offerings of the Law were

- mere shadows of the Reality needed to “win the war on sin”
- not able to remove sin...sin remained, the curse remained
- of the blood from “not made in the image of God”

Sacrifices of bulls and goats and sheep were not pleasing to God...

1 Sam 15:22-23 obedience is better than sacrifice

Ps 51:16-17 broken spirit, broken and contrite heart

Is 1:10-18 hate the outward religious rituals, do well/obey

so Jesus was given a human body to please God

- a body to be sacrificed...the Substance of the shadow
- to be God’s Sin Sacrifice...John 1:29
- to remove sin and its stain...so nothing unpleasing would remain

Jesus was given a human Body unstained by sin in which He would defeat sin
A Body prepared...John 1:14

- to be torn...like the veil in the Temple (Heb 10:18-20)
- to be sacrificed

The Biblical account of the birth of Jesus is found in Luke 2:1-20

v1-3

in what days:

following Ch 1

- Gabriel appearing to announce 2 miraculous conceptions
 - John the Baptist, the Forerunner of the Messiah
 - Jesus Christ, the Messiah
- birth of John the Baptist

decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed:

Caesar Augustus

- “the exalted”
- the great-nephew of Julius Caesar
- the 1st Roman Emperor...when in 27 BC the Roman Senate gave him all legal power to rule Rome's religious, civil and military affairs
- when he died, the Roman Senate declared him a god and the Romans worshipped him...an anti-christ

He did what all earthly kings do – taxed the people, make their subjects pay for their government and their indulgences

This was the 1st “worldwide” census and tax decreed by the Roman Empire

Everyone was ordered to go to their hometown to be counted and put on the tax registers

According to Jewish historian Josephus, the decree was handed down in 6 BC; it took years to accomplish

v4-5

Joseph...and Mary...were of the house/line/family of David

Thus, Bethlehem was their hometown

By decree of the Roman Emperor, they left Nazareth in Galilee and traveled south to Bethlehem in Judea

In order to avoid the Samaritans (2 Kings 17:23-29), they would go [map]

- East to the Jordan River
- South to Jericho
- West to Jerusalem
- Up 2700 feet in elevation

An arduous 3 day journey...especially if you are 9 months pregnant!

The place is significant...a little town about 8 miles from Jerusalem...Bethlehem

- foretold to be the birthplace of the Messiah...Micah 5:2
- “house of bread”...John 6:35
- hometown of David...the King
- source of sheep for Temple sacrifice...The Lamb of God (John 1:29)

v6-7

she brought forth her firstborn son: A highly significant word: firstborn

- holy...belongs to God (Ex 13:2, 13)
- double portion of inheritance...yet not always the oldest/first born
 - Isaac vs Ishmael
 - Jacob vs Esau
 - Joseph vs Rueben
 - Ephraim vs Manasseh
- preeminent
 - Col 1:15-18
 - Heb 1:1-8
 - Phil 2:5-8

What is the attire for the King?

Rags vs designer clothes/Armani suits

His family was poor (v22-24), not wealthy as some teach

His “lot” was poverty...but then again any social class would have been
poverty compared to the glory He set aside to come to us

Due to the Census, every room in every inn/house was occupied

So the accommodations for The Messiah: a stone feeding trough in a cave

Would the Jews write a script like this for their Messiah?

Is 55:8-9 God’s ways and thoughts are not like ours!

2 Cor 8:9 though rich, for our sake’s became poor,
by His poverty we might be rich (eternal, not material)

Note: RCC’s Church of the Nativity...one of darkest places I have been to

v8-11

Shepherds...humble, of a low estate in society...were watching their flocks

- of sheep for the sacrifices in the Temple
(burnt offering every morning and every night)
- in the fields – Boaz and Ruth’s fields (Ruth, Matt 1:5)
- at night – too cold for both man and animal in late December

Faithfully tending their beloved flocks, the shepherds are suddenly basking in a light brighter than the noon day sun

Terrified, the shepherds hear the calming/soothing words of the messenger

“Fear not!” (ala Zacharias and Mary)

I come bearing Good News...for whosoever, for all people...
not just the Jews!”

On this appointed day, determined before the foundation of the world,
Jesus was born

- as a helpless infant
- unto Israel, as promised to AIJJ&D
- at night...Light of the world came at night into darkness (John 1:4-5)
- in Bethlehem...just as foretold/promised by the Word of God

Jesus is

- Savior...the Holy One of Israel, God
- Christ...”anointed”...Messiah (Jewish)
- Lord...Master and Supreme Authority of all

“No God besides Me.
No savior besides Me.”
Is 45:5a, 15, 21
Hosea 13:4

There is an Almighty Master/Lord
There is a Supreme Authority over our lives
There is a Savior.

He came to reveal Himself to us
He came to save us from sin and death
He came to rule over us

As a child needs parents, we need a Savior and Lord
His name is Jesus

v12-20

The angel said to the shepherds:

“You will seek and find...the Savior/Christ/Lord.”

The choir of angels sang

- the praises of Jesus
- of the glory of God
- peace and good will (with/from God) to all men

The shepherds talked among themselves and said,

“Let us go...and see.”

They went...immediately...and found.

They made it known what they had been told about this baby

All who heard their testimony/witness “wondered” about this child Whose name is Wonderful

But Mary thought long and hard about this witness of her son

She has no frame of reference in “normal” life for these things

Hers is a unique calling

She is not yet sure what all these things mean,

she just knows God is working in ways that are far above
man’s ways

Then the shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, praising God for all that
they had seen and heard

Let us consider Jesus

- set aside His glory and came with humility...beautiful in the eyes of God
- a body was prepared for Him...to be torn and sacrificed as God’s Sacrifice for Sin
- was sent...John 3:16
- announced by angels...to a humble few
- yet there was no room for Him...left outside

On earth during man’s reign, Jesus is always on the outside:

- stable vs inn
- Calvary vs city
- relationship vs religion
- the Church at the end (Rev 3:20)

Jesus came not with peace but with a sword...to divide a people unto Himself

The Gospel of Jesus Christ (God’s Plan of Redemption) is

- offensive to “dead men”
- a revelation of the Spirit
- the power of God unto salvation for whosoever believes

Wonder at and ponder the things Jesus said and did
Humble yourself...seek Him while He may be found as the Lamb of God

Welcome Him into your heart
Embrace Him as the Lord of your life
Then go share Him with others this week...and invite them to come hear about Him