

You have come to a group that is unusual among religious groups in that there will be no special Christmas service here. You may wonder why!

The reasons are simple – there is no command in the Scriptures to remember this day, and we need authority for all we do in our assembly.

Col 3:17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We do know, however, that the birth of Jesus was truly the most joyous moment the world has ever known.

Luke 2:12 "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

We never find another day on which the angels appear to men to praise God, although there is a day when the angels will return with Jesus (2Th 1.7).

We have no way of knowing exactly when the day of Jesus' birth was, although we can be sure it was not Dec 25.

Dec 25 was probably chosen by the Roman Catholic church based on a feast the pagans held to celebrate the time they could tell the day was lengthening after the winter solstice (in the Northern Hemisphere, the shortest period of daylight of the year occurs on Dec 21).

What does the Bible say?

Luke 2:8 And in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night.

Shepherds in field -- normally 6-8" rain in Dec-Jan around Bethlehem and frost from Dec-Feb. There would be no shepherds in their fields in Dec. Flocks are put out from Mar-Nov, Shepherds in field Mar-Apr with lambs. In Oct shepherds move sheep from hills to winter quarters.

Thus, we can be certain Dec 25th
is not the date of Jesus' birth.

There would have been no
shepherds in the fields watching
their flocks!

What year? A monk, Exiguus, in AD 525 set the calendar without remembering the year 0 between BC and AD and the 4 years when Augustus ruled as Octavian (his real name).

But Luke gives us a great deal of detail about the time of the birth.

Luk 1:3-4 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, (4) so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

– This was Herod the great (73 BC-4 BC) – not to be confused with Herod Antipas (the tetrarch 20 BC – 40 AD Mt 14.1) or Herod Agrippa (10 BC-44 AD Acts 12.23)

Luke 2:1 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.

Caesar Augustus (ruled 27 BC to AD 14)

Josephus, the Jewish Historian, tells us that Herod the great died near an eclipse which occurred Mar 13, 4 BC. Jesus would have been born one to two years earlier

Matt 2:16 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. ...

Lk2:2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

“Quirinius twice governed Syria as legatus of the divine Augustus”, first in 12 BC and then 9-6 BC.

An inscription in Ankara lists years of taxation and 8 BC is the closest, but slow travel might have delayed to 6 BC.

Matt 2:1 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, 2 "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."

The star which the magi saw may have been an occultation (a hiding or supposed touching) of Jupiter by the moon on Mar 20, 6 BC at 1 minute after sunset. The magi would have known but the occurrence would not have been visible in Palestine. A second occultation occurred on April 17, 6 BC when Jupiter rose “in the east” in the dawn sky; a possibility for the star of Bethlehem

We have now placed the most likely year of Jesus birth at about 6 B.C., and the day in March of that year, when the Shepherds would have been in the field, watching as the lambs were born.

The arrival of the wise men was not at the manger (a feeding tray for the cattle), where Jesus was laid after his birth, as they had to see the star and then travel to Jerusalem to see Herod the King (Matt 2.2-5) where they find Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem.

Why was this birth so important that both
shepherds and magi came to worship the
child?

Matt 4:10 Then Jesus said to him,
"Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You
shall worship the Lord your God, and
serve Him only.'"

Jesus is Lord at His birth

Isa 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said: "My soul
exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has
rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 "For He
has had regard for the humble state of
His bonds slave; For behold, from this time
on all generations will count me blessed.
49 "For the Mighty One has done great
things for me; And holy is His name.

However, we must temper our
condemnation of the observances of days
due to personal liberty.

Individually, we know that there are those
without knowledge and are weak in the
faith.

Rom 14:1 Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ... 5 One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind.

6 He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ...

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. ...

20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. ... 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

Let's remember there are some very good things associated with the season.

**Jesus the Christ is on everyone's
mind!**

An attitude of giving

Matt 25:35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; 36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Gathering with loved ones.

Heb 13:1 Let love of the brethren
continue.

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind,
and is not jealous; love does not brag and
is not arrogant, 5 does not act
unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is
not provoked, does not take into account
a wrong suffered,

An attitude of kindness

John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Eph 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Minds are centered on Jesus

Matt 28:19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

What must we teach?

We are to remember the Lord every day of our
lives

Eph 4:1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,
entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the
calling with which you have been called, 2
with all humility and gentleness, with
patience, showing forbearance to one another
in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity
of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Let us celebrate the Lord's Day as
commanded:

Not His birth,

but His death

1 Cor 11:26 For as often as you eat this
bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the
Lord's death until He comes.

We never find another day on which the angels appear to men to praise God, although there is a day when the angels will return with Jesus (2Th 1.7).

2 Thess 1:7 ... when the Lord Jesus shall
be revealed from heaven with His
mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing
out retribution to those who do not know
God and to those who do not obey the
gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these
will pay the penalty of eternal
destruction, away from the presence of
the Lord and from the glory of His
power,

2 Thess 1:10 on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

Have you believed this testimony?

Mar 16:16 *Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*