

## The Promised Messiah

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### Scriptures:

Luke 1:24-36

John 1:14a

2 Corinthians 5:21

Acts 1:11

2 Peter 3:10

Matthew 24:36-51

Once more the Advent season is upon us and children are counting the number of 'sleeps' until Christmas day. In schools and churches, children will be dressing up in Bible costume and re-telling the story of that first Christmas in Bethlehem, as proud parents and grandparents gather to watch and applaud. Houses and gardens are festooned with lights, and, despite the problems in the world, many sense a spirit of joy. However, for others Christmas is a very sad and lonely season.

I don't want to be a killjoy for the many who are celebrating, but I became very troubled several years ago when I discovered that Christmas was attached to the ancient pagan festival of saturnalia. Saturnalia was an ancient Roman festival and holiday in honour of the god Saturn. The festival lasted from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> December each year. It is best I don't list the wicked and sinful practices that continued throughout this time because this is not where we want to focus, as little children stand wide eyed when they see the pretty lights, Christmas trees, Father Christmas and the beautifully wrapped gifts.

Interestingly, the Biblical account in Luke 1:24-36 makes December the most probable time of Jesus' conception. For those who understand the Jewish calendar, the birth of Jesus most probably took place from mid September to early October - six months after His cousin John the Baptist was born, which coincides with the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. My 'Tree of Life' Jewish bible records in John 1:14

*"And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. We looked upon His glory, the glory of the one and only from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

Tabernacle means 'The dwelling place of God'. In most English versions 'tabernacle' is replaced with the word 'dwelt', but whichever version you read, it is good to spend time really drinking in the truth that God came down to earth to dwell among us whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, young or old. This makes it even more significant that Jesus was most likely born during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. God's timing is always perfect. Knowing the exact date of Jesus' birth is nowhere near as important as knowing that our immortal, eternal, Holy God so loved the world that He was willing to take on flesh, to dwell/tabernacle among sinful mankind in order to identify with our struggles and then to become the ultimate sacrifice for sin, thus securing salvation for everyone who calls upon His Name. *"He who knew no sin, became sin for us."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)

But the story doesn't end here. Indeed the cross is where our eternity with Father, Son and Holy Spirit begins, and the really good news is that those who watched Him ascend were told by a heavenly messenger, *"Why do you stand*

*gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will so come in like manner as you saw Him go.*" (Acts 1:11). Jesus teaches us to watch for those signs that will foreshadow His return and Peter warns us to be vigilant because Jesus will return *"like a thief in the night."* (2 Peter 3:10).

So, when will this come to pass? Jesus tells us that no one knows but the Father. (Matthew 24:36-51). However, Jesus does tell us to watch for the signs in the heavens and the prophets in the Old Testament speak of many signs we shall see as His return draws near. Therefore pay no heed to those false prophets who seek to pinpoint the day and even the hour of His return. Instead, remain vigilant in the work He has called you to do, and listen for the trumpet sound that will herald the return of our coming King.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, we watch eagerly for that wonderful, glorious day when all nations shall gather at Your coming again in glory to Mount Zion, but until that time may we never give up reaching out to the prodigals and those who don't yet know You, for we know it is not Your will that any should perish. May we be found among the labourers reaching out into the harvest field of souls who don't yet know You so that on the day of Your coming many will cry out to You from the valley of decision and be saved. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwuUHtRXDFE>