

Happy Birthday, Jesus ... in March?

March 23 this week will, we believe, mark the 2023rd anniversary of the birth of Jesus.

That's right. We believe that we can put together the prophecies, historical data, astronomical data and Scripture to pinpoint the birth of Jesus to March 23, 5 B.C.

We know from Luke 3:23 that Jesus was about 30 when He began His ministry. The prophet Daniels tells us the year of Christ's anointing would come 69 sevens, or 483 years, after the decree which sent Ezra to Jerusalem in 458 B.C. (Dan. 9:25). Doing the math and remembering that there is no year "0," Daniel's prophecy says Jesus would begin His ministry in A.D. 26. This year is backed up by two dates from Scripture. John the Baptist began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius, A.D. 25 (Luke 3:1), and Josephus said Jesus cleared the temple the first time 46 years after Herod began renovating it (John 2:20) in 20 B.C. or A.D. 27. Thus, many Bible scholars believe A.D. 26 is the year Jesus began his ministry. If He was 30 years old, remembering again that there is no year "0," He would have been born in 5 B.C.

Jesus would have been born either in the spring or fall of the year according to the Scripture surrounding the birth of John the Baptist. John's father, Zechariah was a member of the priestly order of Abijah (Luke 1:5) which, according to rabbinical sources, ministered at the temple in May and November. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple, and Zechariah would have gone home and probably conceived John the Baptist in June or December, so he would have been born nine months later in March or September. We know from Scripture that John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus (Luke 1:26) so Jesus would have been born in

September or March of 5 B.C.

To find the exact time of year, we look to astronomy and archaeology. We know that there was a star which appeared when Jesus was born and that Magi from the East, possibly following the prophetic teachings of Daniel the Magi (Dan. 2:48), came looking for Him (Matt. 2:1,2). The Chinese also saw the star, identifying it as a nova that appeared in the spring of 5 B.C. and burned for 70 days. Dating the star of Bethlehem to the spring of 5 B.C. means that John the Baptist was conceived in December of 7 B.C., Jesus was conceived in June of 6 B.C., John the Baptist was born in September of 6 B.C. and Jesus was born in March of 5 B.C.

King Herod, the tyrannical ruler of Judea, had interviewed the Magi when they arrived in Jerusalem. According to our research, described in *The Stars of His Coming* (get free download here), there were signs in the sun, moon and stars surrounding the birth of Jesus beginning with Zechariah in 7 B.C. The Magi would have testified to the same date, and for that reason Herod ordered all of the children under 2 years old in Bethlehem to be killed. Josephus tells us that there was a lunar eclipse on Passover and that Herod died later that year. This lunar eclipse, or blood moon, occurred on March 23, 5 B.C. The blood moon occurred in the spring of 5 B.C., concurrent with the star of Bethlehem, but one additional piece of evidence is needed to suggest that this is the day Jesus was born.

We find it in Revelation 12:1-2, which describes a sign in the heavens, a woman clothed in the sun with the moon at her feet, at the moment of Christ's birth. The woman clothed in the sun is the zodiacal constellation Virgo (The Virgin), which promises that God will send a Savior through virgin birth. Astronomical research shows that the blood moon of March 23, 5 B.C. occurred while the moon was in the feet of Virgo. Thus, Revelation 12:1-2 presents us with a picture of the night sky when Jesus was born, and that night was March 23, 5 B.C.

Of course, we know the whole world will continue to celebrate the birthday of Jesus on Dec. 25. In its way, it is fitting to celebrate the advent on the old Roman winter solstice, when it all began with the conception of John the Baptist around the winter solstice of 7 B.C. and signs in the sun, moon and stars began to appear.

Even so, it is nice to know His real birthday so we in His family can honor Him on His actual birthday.

Happy Birthday, Jesus! {eoa}

Ron Allen is a Christian businessman, CPA and author who serves in local, national and international ministries, spreading a message of reconciliation to God, to men and between believers. He is founder of the International Star Bible Society, telling how the heavens declare the glory of God; the Emancipation Network, which helps people escape from financial bondage; and co-founder with his wife, Pat, of Corporate Prayer Resources, dedicated to helping intercessors.