

Matthew chapter 2 (12/18/11) Sunday School

Where was Jesus born? And during what time? Matt. 2:1

What is a Magi? And how many were they? Matt. 2:11

What is the exact time the star appeared? Matt. 2:7

Who or where do you (we) look for wisdom? Matt. 2:4

How long did it take the Magi to find Jesus? Matt. 2:11

Do we or you obey warning or even warning sign? Matt. 2:12

How long did Jesus and his parents stay in Egypt? Matt. 2:15

What were some of the prophecies that were fulfilled in Matt. Chapter. 2?

Matt 2:14 -> Hosea 11:1, Matt. 17 -> Jeremiah 13:15

History, as believers we should know and understand

Is December 25 Jesus birthday?

Whose birthday is it?

When was Jesus born?

Clues (Jesus birthday) - **Luke 1** (Luke is the author of this Gospel as well as the book of Acts.)

Luke 1:5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the **priestly division of Abijah**; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

Abijah was the eighth priestly division. The priestly rotation began in the Hebrew month of Nissan (mid-March to mid-April), and therefore the division of Abijah would have served at the end of Iyyar (mid-April to mid-May) and again at the end of Marheshvan (mid-October to mid-November). During the Second Temple period, the twenty-four priestly divisions served in the temple at Jerusalem in a rotation system. A list of priestly divisions can be found in **1 Chronicles 24:7-18**

Like the other divisions, the priests of Abijah served in the temple for one week twice a year. We cannot be sure whether the events connected with Zechariah mentioned by Luke took place during the week of his division's spring or fall service. Therefore, we have no way of knowing exactly when Zechariah served. For the same reasons, it is impossible to calculate the date of Jesus' birth based on the time of Zechariah's service.

In the **sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy**, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. Luke 1:26

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to **conceive is in her sixth month**. Luke 1:26

Thus, in order to locate the time of the year of the division of Abijah, the Protestant procedure is to calculate 8 fortnights, commencing from the middle of March, which corresponds to the Jewish month of Nisan or Av. So, according to these calculations, 15th March + 8 fortnights = 15th July = the end of the "division of Abijah" and the commencement of Elizabeth's pregnancy. Thereafter, 15th July + 6 months = 15th January = Immaculate Conception of the Holy Mother and 15th January + 9 months = 15th **October** = the approximate date of Jesus' Birth.

Also

(Nehemiah 12: 1-7) Only 4 of the 24 divisions returned. And we see now, that the division of Abijah is no longer the 8th, but the 12th! Now, if we add to the preceding calculation another 4 fortnights, we see that the Birth of Jesus Christ becomes: 15th October + 60 days (4 fortnights) = 15th **December** = the approximate date of Christ's Birth! It is not difficult to see just how close this date is to the 25th of December; and furthermore, the 10 days' variance can be easily explained, thus proving that the Lord Jesus Christ was indeed born on the 25th of December.

Short Christmas History

For the church's first three centuries, Christmas wasn't in December—or on the calendar at all. The eventual choice of December 25, made perhaps as early as 273, reflects a convergence of Origen's concern about pagan gods and the church's identification of God's son with the celestial sun. December 25 already hosted two other related festivals: *natalis solis invicti* (the Roman "birth of the unconquered sun"), and the birthday of Mithras, the Iranian "Sun of Righteousness" whose worship was popular with Roman soldiers. The winter solstice, another celebration of the sun, fell just a few days earlier. Seeing that pagans were already exalting deities with some parallels to the true deity, church leaders decided to commandeer the date and introduce a new festival. Western Christians first celebrated Christmas on December 25 in 336, after Emperor Constantine had declared Christianity the empire's favored religion.

What does Jesus want us to remember as believers? 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

... do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me

