



## In His Dust – The Nativity Festival December 16, 2022

These facts and suggestions were gleaned from Dwight Pryor's message called *The Christmas Controversy*. It has been condensed from seven pages to one. I offer it because my subscribers encompass a diversity of understanding and conviction. This message refreshed me!

### Facts about *The Nativity Festival*

1. Just because Christmas is not mentioned in the Bible, doesn't mean we shouldn't celebrate Messiah's birth. *Post-biblical* does not mean *anti-biblical*. Matthew and Luke both share this story that changed history forever! One more example among many of a post-biblical celebration is Hanukkah. Yeshua went up to the Temple in Jerusalem for this Feast of Dedication (John 10:22-23).
2. The date of Messiah Yeshua's (Jesus) birth is unknown. Scholars agree that He was born between 6 and 4 BC, because King Herod the Great was alive when Yeshua was born and then died in 4 BC.
3. It is likely that Yeshua was born in the springtime. We know from Jewish literature that shepherds in ancient Judea brought their flocks in from the pastures in early November and did not take them out until early spring, probably March or April.
4. Under the influence of the Church at Rome, the Nativity celebration on December 25 became commonplace in the West at the end of the fourth century. This tradition started partly from the Christians' need to combat paganism as well as great heresy. Their celebration pushed back against the following evils to reinforce the truth in the minds of the people:
  - The pagan celebration of the winter solstice on which Roman citizens celebrated *Natalis Solis Invicti*—the (re)Birth of the Invincible Sun. The Christians celebrated the Son of Righteousness, Yeshua, who arose with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2).
  - The heresy of Arianism that attacked Yeshua's divinity. Church councils believed the Incarnation – the eternal Word in-fleshed in Yeshua – was a distinctive and defining doctrine of the New Testament. Christians celebrated the Festival of the Nativity to emphasize this truth.
  - The heresy of the Gnostics that attacked Yeshua's humanity. Christians celebrated the Festival of the Nativity to emphasize this truth as well.

### How to Celebrate His Birth

- Simplify. Buy less and give more. Give to the poor.
- Celebrate His birth! Rejoice with the angels! Reflect on the profound significance of the Incarnation!
- Focus on Yeshua and the joy of His Spirit. Let your home be known for the sweet spirit of Messiah permeating the festivities. Bear witness of Him to everyone, redeeming the time.
- Be respectful of differing points of view. Listen to one another's concerns.
- Remember, symbols are powerful and convey truth. Christmas trees are not pagan. Jeremiah 10:1-4 refers to idolatry, not to decorations used to celebrate events. The Bible is full of symbols.

May blessing fill your home and shalom cover your gatherings as you celebrate His incarnation!