

# THE MESSENGER



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

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## The Origin and Date of Christmas

The Encyclopedia Britannica says, "Christmas was NOT among the earliest festivals of the church, and before the 5<sup>th</sup> century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on January 6, March 25, or December 25" (Vol. 5, p. 641, 14<sup>th</sup> edition).

Adam Clark, noted commentator on the Bible, and a Methodist minister, says that the birthday of Christ "has been placed by sects and learned men in every month of the year".

The Cyclopedia of Ecclesiastical Literature by McClintock and Strong says "The observance of Christmas is not of divine appointment, nor is it of New Testament origin. The day of Christ's birth cannot be ascertained from the New Testament, or indeed, from any other source. The (church) fathers of the first three centuries do not speak of any special observance of the nativity (birth) of Christ ... The institution may be sufficiently explained by the circumstance that it was the taste of the age to multiply festivals ... at the same time the heathen winter holidays (Saturnalia, Juvenalia, Brumalia) were undoubtedly transformed, and so to speak, sanctified by the establishment of the Christian cycle of holidays; and the heathen customs ... were brought over into Christian use" (Vol. 2, p. 276).

The Encyclopedia of Religion, by Vergilius Ferm says, "According to authentic records no church festival was held in celebration of Christ's birth until the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century" (p. 164).

The World Book Encyclopedia, says, "Scholars do not know the exact date of Christ's birth ... In A.D. 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun. Christians honored Christ, instead of Saturn, as the Light of the World ..." (Vol. 3, p. 416, 1965).

# CHRISTMAS

*By Guthrie Dean*

As we travel through life from day to day;  
We hear things that the Bible doesn't say,

They tell us it was a DECEMBER morn;  
But nobody knows WHEN the Child was born.

Wise men came from the East to make a call;  
But we don't know there were THREE, after all.

The angels did come, glad tidings to bring;  
But we're not told that the angels did SING.

Angels worshipped Him, shepherds did the same;  
The Bible doesn't say that REINDEER came.

No BELLS were ringing on the Lord's birthday;  
There are many things the Bible doesn't say.

I started to say, I don't mean to kick;  
But the Bible doesn't mention ST. NICK.

Cedar Trees, and Fireworks, and Pumpkin Pie;  
Do you like STUFFED TURKEY? Well, so do I.

But it is not there, there's no need to look;  
This CHRISTMAS business is not in the Book.

When the Bible tells of their Egypt flight;  
There's nothing about a DONKEY and LIGHT.

It's fine to give gifts, to visit, and play;  
But don't call it a BIBLE HOLY DAY!

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**News and Notes:** Tuesday Bible Studies – 11 a.m. Old Testament and 7 p.m. Romans

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

*"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."* James 5:16