



January 1, 2020

[H.I.S.] \*He Is Savior, Acts 4:12

## HIS MINISTRIES JANUARY 2020 NEWSLETTER, COVERING DECEMBER 2019

We, along with the entire Christian world, just celebrated, on December 25<sup>th</sup>, the Birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of the Jewish people and the Savior of the world. (Isa. 9:6; 1 Tim. 1:15b.) We are often asked could that, 12/25, be His real birthday. More than likely it is not, but the fact that He was born is the reason to celebrate anyway. We understand that the celebration of Christmas on December 25 arises out of pagan practices, not out of Biblical facts. The main issue is not the date of celebration, but the fact that **He was born in Bethlehem, Judea, (Micah 5:2) in ISRAEL, in the city of King David, and that He is Messiah the Lord - KING of kings and LORD of lords!**

**Details of His birth and time are presented in Luke 2:1-14.**

Historical records reveal that Caesar Augustus (Octavian, nephew of Julius Caesar) made a "decree" that "all the world should be taxed". Caesar Augustus ruled from 43 BC to 14 AD. Under his administration the famous Roman peace was declared throughout the Empire, beginning in 30 BC. Cyrenius (Quirinius) is called the "governor" of Syria in Luke 2:2 and that "this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governing" in Syria. Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus refers to a later census in 6 AD when Quirinius was the actual governor of Syria. But, at the time of Luke 2:2, Quirinius was merely handling administrative duties in behalf of Varus, the actual Governor. Egyptian records tell us that a census was done by Rome every 14 years and that it took several years to accomplish it.

Herod the Great was alive at the time of the Messiah's birth according to Matthew 2:1. The time between the birth of the Messiah and Herod's death is necessary since Joseph and Mary with the baby fled to Egypt and did not return until after Herod's death according to Matthew 2:18-21. The actual date of Herod's death (Roman history) was January 14, 1 BC.

TERTULLIAN, church leader and historian, said that the birth of Yeshua was 41 years after Augustus began his rule, and that Augustus died 15 years after the birth of Yeshua. The actual date of the death of Caesar Augustus was August 19, 14 AD. It is interesting to note that Tertullian also said that Yeshua was born 28 years after the death of Cleopatra who died in 30 BC.

IRENAEUS, a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the Apostle John, says that Yeshua was born in the 41st year of the reign of Caesar Augustus. Eusebius, a great church historian, also reports the same. The 42nd year of Augustus ran from the autumn of 2 BC to the autumn of 1 BC.

ZECHARIAS, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest "of the course of Abijah (Abia)", according to Luke 1:5. There are 24 divisions (or courses) of priests, according to 1 Chronicles 24. Abijah's division was the 8th among the 24 divisions/courses. When the Jewish Temple was destroyed by the Roman Governor Titus on August 5, 70 AD, the first course of priests had just taken office. By tracing back carefully, the 8th course would have ended their duties on July 13, 3 BC. The birth of John the Baptist would be 280 days later (Luke 1:5-25) around April 19-20, 2 BC (which, interestingly, was Passover that year!) The birth of Yeshua would have been six months later (Luke 1:36) which would place His birth in the fall of 2 BC. The very interesting fact in all this is that the actual date in the fall of 2 BC would have been Tishri 1 on the Jewish calendar - which was Rosh Hashanah - the Fall Feast of Trumpets!

Our conclusion (if we have gotten all the facts correct) is that the Messiah, our blessed Lord Yeshua, was born on September 29 in 2 BC (the day of Rosh HaShana).

Another interesting detail we learn from the Word of God (Luke 1:56) is that Mary stayed with her cousin Elizabeth for 3 months, i.e. till her son, John, was born. [Mary may have acted as a midwife to Elizabeth and learn all about childbirth for when her Son, Jesus, was born in a manger, there was only Joseph present with her.]

These two women's pregnancies were miracles from God. (Luke 1:33-38.) Elizabeth was an old woman, way beyond child bearing age, who had lived with shame for being barren, which was considered God's punishment, but now that

she was expecting, her shame was soon to be removed. Mary, a young woman, was shamed for the rest of her life for being pregnant before she and Joseph were married. (John 8:41b.)

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”* (John 3:16.) **The Lord’s ways are not our ways...**

[It is interesting to ponder if there might be, after all, a reason for celebration in December 25<sup>th</sup> for Mary’s pregnancy by the Holy Spirit may have taken place in December and His actual birth nine months later on September 29<sup>th</sup>...]

**Yeshua was born of a Virgin so that we might be born again. He became the Son of God and the Son Man so that we might become the sons and daughters of God. (John 1:12-13.) The Savior laid down His life to give us eternal life. The birth of Jesus is the foundation of the world’s redemption. Believing this is fundamental to our faith. Without the Virgin birth our faith would collapse like the proverbial house built on the sand.**

**God’s holiness demands that all sin has to be punished, and that there must be a full payment made for sin. This full payment was made by the substitutionary death of the Virgin-born Son of God. He had to be fully a man in order to die for our sins, but He had to be sinless in order to pay the sin-debt. By means of His Virgin Birth and His death on the Cross, God is the justifier of those who believe in Jesus and receive Him. (John 3:7; 1:12.)**

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**We have some exciting news.** Edward Magumba with his wife Juliana from Uganda will come to visit us this month.



It was about 13 years ago, in 2006, when we first heard from Edward. Edward had finished his Mormon missionary service in Kenya and had begun to question if Mormonism was indeed true. He started searching via the internet and found a site, [www.exmormon.org](http://www.exmormon.org), and he began reading stories of former Mormons who have had similar questions and who had found that **Mormonism is not** true at all, and had left the church. Unfortunately for many readers from that site, there are only a few among them that offer answers to spiritual questions, i.e. questions about God, Jesus and salvation, and they are not even suggesting that these issues are clearly answered and taught in God’s Word, the Bible. When Edward wrote to us, he said that he had spent a lot of time discussing Mormonism with one of the older former Mormons featured on that site, Richard Packman, who had become an atheist. Edward said that he was leaning towards Packman’s teachings that there is no God. Edward wrote that he had just read our testimony which is #50 on that site and that he wanted ask us a few questions. That started our many months’ long discussion with Edward about evidences for the Bible that includes history, fulfilled prophecies, archeology and teaching about who God is and what He has provided to all who seek to know Him. Edward was a young man with an open mind and willingness to test all things (1 Thess. 5:21) and verify what I was

writing to him. We also sent him information by mail including Dr. Chuck Missler’s Bible-studies, beginning with the Gospel of John and many other books of the Bible. **Please read his story from our website: “Out of Mormonism in Africa”** - click on [www.hismin.com/former-mormon-stories/edwards-story](http://www.hismin.com/former-mormon-stories/edwards-story). We have been in contact with him ever since by email and by phone. After he accepted Jesus of the Bible as his Savior and Lord, he enrolled in a Bible college and became a pastor and teacher of the Word of God. He found a wonderful Christian woman and they got married in 2010. They now have 2 little daughters – older one in this picture.

We have often talked about how great it would be to meet Edward in person, but we didn’t expect that to become reality, not until we are in heaven. **Edward and Juliana are going to be here on 20<sup>th</sup> of January and they will stay with us for 8 days.** We thank the Lord for making this possible. Please pray with us for their safe trip here and back home too, and that we will have a blessed time sharing while they are here.

I am still suffering from fractures and swelling in my vertebra. It has lasted now about 6 months in spite of the surgical procedure that was done at the end of October. Physically I cannot do as much as I would like to, but Dennis is going to take a week off from his work so that he can take our guests around and show them Salt Lake City and as much of Utah as possible, depending on the weather and how much snow we could have.

From our mailbox: What are “fundamentals of Biblical Christianity”? We here about that but do not know what it really means. Is it mandatory to be a fundamental believer in order to be saved? Can you briefly explain that to me?

There are basic fundamental doctrines found only in the Word of God, the Bible, and these are what we must know in order to have true understanding and saving faith in God. I have talked about this in our papers before and this month I will borrow some excerpts from the *Compass International's* article what faith in God includes. (Compass has given me permission to use what we find pertinent from their papers to use in our ministry).

#### INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE

We believe, teach and defend that the Holy Bible is the inerrant, supernaturally inspired Word of God.

About the Word of God Jesus said, *“Your Word is truth.”*(John 17:17.)

*“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing (correctly handling) the word of truth.”* (2 Tim. 2:15.) *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”* (2 Tim. 3:16.) *“For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* (2 Pet. 1:21.)

#### THE TRINITY

We believe, teach and defend that God exists in three eternal co-equal Persons – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* (Matt. 28:19.) *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”* (John 14:9.)

#### THE VIRGIN BIRTH

We believe, teach and defend that Jesus was born of a virgin, without an aid of a man. (Gen. 3:15.)

*“Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: ‘Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name ‘Immanuel’.”* (Isa. 7:14.) *“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, ‘God with us.’”* (Matt. 1:23.)

#### WE ARE SAVED BY FAITH ALONE, IN CHRIST ALONE

We believe, teach and defend that salvation comes to man only through faith in Jesus Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross and His bodily resurrection three days later.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and also for the Greek (gentile).”* (Rom. 1:16.) *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”* (Titus 3:5.)

#### THE BIBLE SHOULD BE INTERPRETED LITERALLY

We believe, teach and defend that every word of the Bible is inspired by God and thus should be interpreted within a dispensational framework, in its proper context.

*“...and to make all people see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Christ Jesus.”* (Eph. 3:9.) *“Study to show yourself approved to God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (handling God’s Word correctly).”* (2 Tim. 2:15.)

#### THE RAPTURE AND THE 2<sup>ND</sup> COMING OF CHRIST

We believe, teach and defend that Jesus will return first in the clouds and bring with Him those who have died in Christ, and we (born again believers) who are alive will meet Him in the air (the Rapture) and go with Him to His Mansions (John 14:1-4). Seven years later when He comes to reign for thousand years as King of kings and the Lord of lords of the whole earth from Jerusalem, Israel, we all will return with Him.

*“...in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* (1 Cor. 15:52.) *“Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.”* (Rev. 20:6.)

#### SALVATION IS NOT BY WORKS

We believe, teach and defend that salvation is permanent, eternal and forever based on what Jesus did on the cross, and not what we do or don’t do on this earth.

*“...For He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU’.”* (Hebr. 13:5.)

*“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in*

*Christ Jesus, our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39.) “For by grace you have been saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9.) “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16.)*

#### CREATION

We believe, teach and defend that God created the earth out of nothing in six literal 24 hour days, about 6000 years ago, give or take year.

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1.) “For in the six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.” (Ex. 20:11.)*

*“...God, who... calls those things which do not exist, as though they did.” (Rom. 4:17b.)*

#### MANKIND IS BORN SINFUL

We believe, teach and defend that man is born sinful and separated from God.

*“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23.)*

#### JESUS RESURRECTED

We believe, teach and defend that Jesus defeated death, was bodily resurrected and is alive today.

*“He is not here, but He is risen!” (Luke 24:6.) “Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” (2 Tim. 2:8.)*

#### HELL IS LITERAL AND ETERNAL

We believe, teach and defend that an eternal hell will have tormenting flames and is dark. It awaits those who do not trust God’s Word and believe that Jesus died on the cross for their personal sins and that He was resurrected, defeating death.

*“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:41.)*

*“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:15.)*

#### THE JEWS ARE GOD’S CHOSEN PEOPLE

We believe, teach and defend that the Jews (Israel) were chosen by God as His special people.

*“For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.” (Deut. 7:6.)*

Presenting the gospel was to the *“Jew first, and also for the Greek (Gentiles).” (Rom. 1:16b.)* It was because they had for centuries been taught and received instructions from God through His prophets, thus they had a responsibility to God before the Gentiles who did not have the law or the prophets. “Jew first” did not indicate “favoritism” but historical order in which the gospel went out. *The Gospel was proclaimed to the Jew first*, and the first believers, even tens of thousands of them, indeed were Jews. Even the judgment of God always is according to the light and truth received. (Rom. 2:2, 10.) [If you have questions on any of this, please just ask and I will elaborate further.]

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#### Question about giving money to God’s work: Is it by giving how we get *better-off* financially?

There are *perverted prosperity messages* that claim that if we give money to our church or for God’s other works, we will get that back plus a nice monetary return on our *“investment in God.”*

Do not forget that God knows our hearts and He knows why we give! If we give to God with selfish motives or even out of fear of judgment (legalism), we have missed our opportunity to be blessed by God. God will not bless our giving if we are simply looking for a *“return on our investment.”* We are not to give to God like when you buy a stock, *looking to double or triple your investment.* We give to God out of a grateful and thankful heart as an act of worship and obedience. We give to God cheerfully, not to expect anything back, but to show God our love and respect. Again, ALL that we have already belongs to God so we can’t buy God’s blessings. God doesn’t need our money; He is looking for our faithfulness to Him. Giving to God is not something we should do for any other reason but to tell Him how much we love Him.

Our *prosperity* is not measured in how much money we have, but in our relationship with Jesus Christ! Some of the richest people in the world have NOTHING in the way of material possessions, yet, they are more prosperous than someone with millions in the bank but without Christ in their life. As for giving, while God can and does bless people even financially as they are faithful and obedient, the majority of our blessings are not monetary. They come in the form of things that have nothing at all to do with money or earthly riches. Faithfulness to God brings peace to our hearts, blessings of happiness in our marriage and relationship with children and friends - there is an unlimited number of ways God can bless us in this life that is worth far more than money. As you are faithful in giving to God’s

work, God will bless you, but it may not always be in the form of a monetary blessing. Can God work financial miracles in people's lives? YES He surely can! Will God honor our faithfulness when we give to His work? Surely He will! Can God bless us financially? Absolutely He can, if that is what He sees as a needed blessing at this time in our lives! The REAL prosperity message has nothing to do with money. It is about having an intimate, vibrant, daily relationship with Jesus Christ. You can't buy that, you can't give a so-called "love offering" to get that, it is something that we can only receive by faith and God's grace. As some television commercial states, "It is priceless." The real prosperity comes from loving and serving the Lord with grateful heart for our eternal salvation we already have received from Him when we became His sons and daughters. (John 1:12-13.)

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We are very thankful for your faithfulness to our Lord you have shown by partnering with us in this important work. We know that it is the Lord who prompts you to assist us, [as you know we are not a "paid ministry", we have no salary from any church or organization]. We present our requests for help to the Lord as He instructs in Phil. 4:6-7, 19, and we trust that it is He who relates them to you. There are only a few persons that we can count on for help, but that is fine, for our ministry is the Lord's Ministry, He is our provider. With every gift we receive for the Ministry we are reminded of your closeness to Him and that we are together reaching lost souls for Him. **There will be joy in heaven with God's angels for everyone that we have been able to give Bibles and other materials to and share the gospel and bring them to repentance.** (Luke 15:10.) We can't force anyone to get saved. That is a choice they have to make for themselves. But we can certainly make sure they know about that choice and how critical it is since what they do with Jesus will determine where their eternal home is going to be, heaven or hell. What they ultimately choose to do is something they have to decide for themselves. **However, if we love and care enough about the lost who are now or who will come into our lives, we will let them know that if they die without Christ of the Bible in their hearts they will spend eternity in hell rather than in heaven.** That is how important sharing our faith can be to them.

With heartfelt "thank you", we will be sending in the next couple of weeks receipts for your income tax purposes for the gifts you have given to our ministry during 2019.

We are currently working with several Mormons, reasoning with them with the truth of the Bible (Isa. 1:18) that tells who God is, who Jesus is and how they can be sure of their salvation. We are asking that you'd pray with us for each one of them. We continue to pray also for our own spiritually lost family members. **Time is getting short and we do not want them to miss eternity with the Lord.**

We also ask you to continue to pray for those on our prayer-list for their particular needs (we are naming just a few of them here) – Judy, Dale, Sharon, Al, Sandy, Aira, Dwayne, Cynthia, Scott and Andrea, Mary, Tom, Dave, Heber and Preston. The Lord knows what their needs or concerns are. Thank you for praying.

**We also ask you to pray with us for the peace of Jerusalem.** (Ps. 122:6.) **Please pray for our country that is in turmoil, and pray for our President and leaders God has appointed for us and for this time.** (Rom. 13:1-2.)

**HAPPY NEW YEAR, 2020. May the Lord bless you and give you Joy as you serve Him.**

We also are serving the Lord with thankful heart until He comes to take us to be with Him forever.

Rauni & Dennis Higley

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