

randyduke@protonmail.com**News of the Week:**

- a. Class notes posted to www.SJCalvaryBerean.com or scan the QR code
- b. **Understanding the Times:** Today at 1:00 on 88.1 FM or anytime at links **below**
 - i. Mark Henry interviews Jason Carlson and Jill Martin Rische to discuss how demonic & New Age (yoga, enneagrams, etc) work their way into society and the church
 - ii. Available at <https://olivetreeviews.org/radio-archives/> & www.youtu.be/eH6bMe1brN8
- c. **News Highlights from Amir Tsarfati's 'Telegram' feeds**
 - i. Join Amir Tsarfati's Telegram feed @ <https://t.me/beholdisraelchannel>
 - ii. **Dec 13:** Belarusian army started unannounced exercise "to test the readiness of the army for combat"
 - iii. **Dec 14:** Putin readies massive Yars nuclear missile capable of hitting US and UK.
 - iv. **Dec 15:** When will Israel be saved? Hosea 5:15 (https://youtu.be/omg_GqzJ8E)
 - v. **Dec 16:** 60 cruise missiles fired by Russia at critical energy facilities in Kharkiv, Kory, Sumi, and Dnipro. Kharkiv and Poltava districts were left completely without electricity
 - vi. **Dec 16:** <https://beholdisrael.org/the-true-meaning-of-hanukkah-5/>
 - vii. **Dec 17:** NBC report: An official in the Biden administration told members of Congress in a special briefing that the Ukrainian military has the ability to liberate the Crimean peninsula from Russia. Other officials in the administration express concern that a widespread Ukrainian attack will push Putin to use nuclear weapons.
 - viii. **Dec 17:** An all-time low: The Iranian Rial crossed the threshold of 390,000 Rials per US dollar
- d. **ONE MORE PROOF of the Bible's INERRANT ACCURACY!!!** <https://bit.ly/3FZHxVN>
- e. **And yet ANOTHER discovery confirming the Bible's accuracy** <https://bit.ly/3jaSsgj>
- f. **Scary vision of the future? How might transhumanism work with this? (World's first artificial womb facility)**
 - i. <https://bit.ly/3uZsJdh>
- g. **Pence Predicts Trump's appointed SCOTUS Justices will have final say on Congress' Gay Marriage Act**
 - i. <https://bit.ly/3W2T8mi>
- h. **Even Food Banks Feeling the Impact of Food Shortages and Declining Donations**
 - i. <https://bit.ly/3G2cOkw>

**II. Christmas According To Scripture**

- a. nothing wrong with traditions, but, do we hold to 'truths' whose roots are in 'tradition' but not in fact?
- b. **Is celebrating Christmas endorsed or prohibited in Scripture?**
 - i. Christmas is not mentioned in the Bible; Births were not recorded or celebrated in Biblical times; Do some of our Christmas traditions have 'Pagan Origins'?
 - ii. A balanced answer: <https://youtu.be/1NzVvIAYcFI> (GotQuestions.org)
- c. **Does the Bible gives us any answers?**
 - i. Luke 2:1; Isaiah 9:6; Colossians 2:16; Zechariah 9:9
- d. **Was Jesus born on December 25?**
 - i. The Bible doesn't say. Mary may have been told she was pregnant in late December. So, our Christmas celebration could be recognized as an observation of the incarnation of 'the Word made flesh' (John 1:14).
 - ii. If Christ were born on the Feast of Tabernacles, it would have been very appropriate, for it was at His birth that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt (literally 'tabernacled') among us" (John 1:14).
- e. **Did our calendar year stat at Jesus' birth?**
 - i. The Bible doesn't give the exact year Jesus was born. Matt 2:1 says Jesus was born during the days of Herod. Herod died between 4 B.C. to 1 B.C.. When Joseph, Mary & Jesus fled Bethlehem, Herod ordered all boys 2 yrs & younger in the vicinity killed. Thus, Jesus could have been as old as 2 at Herod's death. This places the date of Christ's birth between 6 - 4 B.C (some argue as close as 2 B.C.). Luke 2:1-2 states: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria". Caesar Augustus reigned from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. Quirinius governed Syria during this same time. Luke 3:23 states "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age". Jesus began His ministry when John the Baptist ministered in the wilderness, & John's ministry started "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar" (Luke 3:1)
 - ii. The only time period that fits all of these facts is between A.D. 27-29. If Jesus was "about thirty years of age" by A.D. 27, a birth sometime between 6 and 4 B.C. would fit the chronology. Using these dates, Jesus would have been approx. 32 years old at the time He began His ministry (still "about thirty years of age").

- f. **Did Mary ride a donkey to Bethlehem?**
 - i. Maybe, but the Bible doesn't record how Mary & Joseph got to Bethlehem. (read Luke 2:4-5)
- g. **Did Mary give birth the night she arrived in Bethlehem?**
 - i. The Bible doesn't say so. They could have arrived weeks earlier. God's Word simply states, "*while they were there [in Bethlehem], the days were accomplished that she should be delivered*" (Luke 2:6).
- h. **Did Joseph go from Inn to Inn seeking a room?**
 - i. Perhaps, but there's no biblical record that he did. Although innkeepers play a prominent part in many Christmas plays, no innkeeper is actually mentioned in the biblical record of Christ's birth.
- i. **OK, but what about the Church of the Nativity?**
 - i. Around A.D. 326-330, Empress Helena (Constantine's wife) built a church over the cave thought to be Jesus' birthplace. The church was rebuilt in the 6th century & pieces of the original building still remain. It's said to be the oldest Christian church in existence and one of the most holy sites in the Holy Land.
- j. **Did angels sing to the shepherds?**
 - i. Perhaps, but the Bible doesn't specifically say that the angels sang. It says that first an angel appeared and spoke (Luke 2:9-10), and "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" (Luke 2:13).
- k. **Did three kings come to Jesus' birth?**
 - i. The Bible doesn't record any kings (or camels) at Jesus' birth. Matthew 2:1 reports "After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem..."
 - ii. When Christ was around 2 years old, the Bible says wise men ("magi") came, but doesn't say how many. 'Magi' is the plural form of 'Magus'.
 - iii. We get our notion of 3 from the gifts mentioned
- l. **How did Santa get interjected into Christmas?**
 - i. Interestingly enough, "Santa" or St Nicholas was an actual historic figure. He lived from 270 AD – 6 December 343 AD. He was from wealthy parents, but orphaned & 'adopted' by the Church. He gave away his wealth to the poor. He was appointed as the Bishop of Myra and participated in the Council of Nicaea. Trivia: more Churches are named after St. Nicholas than any other individual
- m. **The genealogy of Jesus ... Scripture NOT tradition**
 - i. There are 2 distinct yet different genealogies for Jesus (Matthew 1 vs. Luke 3) with 2 different bloodlines recorded. This does **NOT** represent any discrepancy or contradiction in the Bible, but actually a CLARIFICATION of Jesus' right to claim 'Messiahship'.
 - ii. Matthew meant for Jewish audience and records Joseph's lineage (42 ancestors tracing Joseph's lineage). Joseph's ancestors included King Jeconiah, who was cursed by God through the Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 22:28-30)
 - 1. Jeremiah cursed Jeconiah (also called "Jehoiachin" (1 Chronicles 3:16, NIV) and "Coniah" (Jeremiah 22:24), that **none of his descendants would ever sit on the throne of Israel**: This is what the LORD says: 'Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.
 - 2. BUT JOSEPH WASN'T JESUS' FATHER ... but he was Jesus' legal guardian
 - iii. The second account in Luke 3:23-38 is meant for a Gentile Audience and contains 76 ancestors tracing Mary's lineage with NO CURSE ... JESUS' BLOODLINE WAS PURE!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!