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Biblical scholars have long recognized that Jesus Christ was not born on December 25. In *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed*, by Dr. Victor Paul Wierwille, the Founding President of The Way International, the case is excellently set forth for the date of his birth to be September 11. Yet on the modern calendar, December 25 is the day set aside by most of Christendom to celebrate Jesus Christ's birth. So, how did it come about that December 25 is observed as Jesus Christ's "birthday"? The origin of this tradition is interesting to research.

Long before Jesus Christ's birth, several ancient pagan cultures celebrated the birth of their sun god with a festival during the winter solstice in late December. When this midwinter festival was adopted in Rome, it was known as the Saturnalia or the Feast of Saturn, characterized by Devil worship, excessive drunkenness, and other licentious activity. The celebration also included the exchanging of gifts, the decorating of fir trees, the yule log, and other customs which remain in the modern Christmas celebration.

By 336 A.D. the Roman church had adapted this festival and connected it to Jesus Christ's birth, calling it the "Feast of the Nativity of the Sun of Righteousness." This was an attempt to Christianize and incorporate the pagan traditions of antiquity that celebrated the time when the sun begins noticeably to produce longer daylight hours and the birthday of the Roman sun god. In doing so, this midwinter holiday somewhat changed its significance, but retained many customs of the pagan festival. As the Roman Catholic Church spread its influence religiously and militarily, this holiday of December 25 became the most popular date in Christendom to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, allowing this festival to evolve into the international holiday of Christmas.

Our awareness of the truth that Jesus Christ was not actually born on December 25 does not need to prevent us from enjoying this holiday. God's Word tells us we can rejoice every day.

Psalms 118:24:

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Although we know that Jesus Christ was not born in December, the holiday season supplies fertile ground to plant the truth of God's Word. During this time when friends and loved ones gather together, we can rejoice in sharing the greatest gift of all, God's only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. As Dr. Wierwille once said, "We're not likely to change the world's traditions, but let us speak the truth and endeavor to live it triumphantly."

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