

# Q: How Many Pagan Gods Were Born of Virgins (or even born) on December 25th? A: Zero

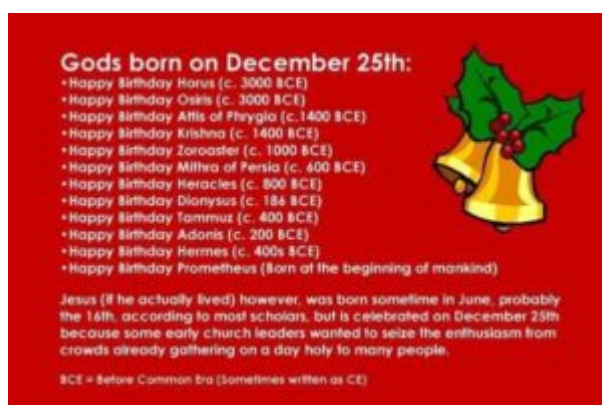
Of the charges leveled in order to undermine Christianity and the historical Yeshua ben Yosef aka [Jesus Christ](#), one of the easiest to debunk is the idea that heathen religions are full of examples of this or that false god being born of a virgin on December 25th. Widespread among atheist detractors, these charges have spawned endless memes over the years – especially since 2007 when the first Zeitgeist documentary was released. Sadly, the claims are so flimsy that even a basic Wikipedia search can tear them to shreds (and you know how I feel about doing research with Wikipedia...) – and yet, they largely go unchallenged. So here is my challenge to those claims, as they are being used to create a false impression that the Jewish Messiah is a myth – and create unfounded arguments among believers. Links to other related articles are in **bold blue**.

Disclaimer: I do not celebrate Christmas, nor do I approve of it. Because of some unfortunate circumstances in the first few centuries of Christianity, Christmas came to replace the Biblical Feast of Tabernacles aka “Sukkot” which occurs during modern September/October sometime prior to 200CE. It is my firm belief that Sukkot was the day referred to be John as when “the Word became flesh and Tabernacled among us.” (John 1.14) My family celebrates the birth of Messiah then, and not in December, which was chosen because of an interesting theory among the [Church Fathers about the conception and death of Messiah occurring on the exact same day](#) – Passover – hence, forty weeks later giving rise to a date of birth of either December 25th or January 6th (both of which are still

observed) depending on when they decided to place Passover.

So this post is [not in any way in defense of Christmas, which I never defend](#), but instead a plea to clean up our online witness by not sharing memes and teachings based on atheist propaganda ([although I do firmly stand against the charge that Jeremiah was speaking against Christmas trees in Jer 10](#)). Promotion of the Feasts should be just that – we should teach the Feasts! I am currently writing two curriculum books within the Context for Kids series designed to teach what the Feasts looked like for an 11-year-old Yeshua/Jesus and 12-year-old John the Baptist in first-century Galilee and Judea.

(NOTE: I will not publish comments unrelated to the topic at hand, which is specifically December 25th being the birthdate of a plethora of pagan gods. I understand this is a very emotional and agenda-driven topic for a lot of folks, and many ministries have staked their reputation on this information but this isn't about anything except what can be proven historically. There is nothing personal about this. Of course, I never publish comments from people who come to the table with cheap shots, emotional arguments, and wild accusations about uninformed opinions about my “true intentions” instead of factual data delivered respectfully.)



This blogpost is going to be a classic example of how lies on colorful memes generally go unchallenged (because people have to pass an honesty test before Adobe will allow them to use Photoshop, right?) – even when it is incredibly easy to do

so. This one clearly states “if he actually lived” and so I would hope that no believer would ever pass this particular one along, but I have seen these same charges passed around by believers on too many occasions to ignore it. I hate to say this, but some believers and ministries regurgitate such

claims without investigation if it suits their agendas, and others outright make up lies – like Reverend Alexander Hislop in the 1850's during the Protestant/Catholic PR wars where no expense was spared in undermining the warring Christian factions (Hislop's book, [The Two Babylons](#), in particular, was racially based in order to offend white British Protestants, attributing the origins of Catholicism to a deformed black man who dared to marry a beautiful white woman). I myself propagated some of these lies in the past – consider this part of my ongoing mea culpa. I want my witness to be worth something – God doesn't need me to pass on revoltingly racist urban legends in order to promote His Word. The truth is all He has ever needed to propagate His Kingdom.

Now, first of all, I want to talk about the Roman Calendar. Every single ancient culture had their own separate Calendar – Egypt's year began and ended with the inundation of the Nile in the summer, Babylonian years ended and began in the Spring in the months of Adar/Nisan during their bizarre twelve day Akitu festival in honor of Marduk, the Athenian calendar (Greek, but there were a lot of different Greek calendars) began and ended in the late summer, the classical Hindu calendar begins in the Spring, and beginning in 45 BCE, the Julian calendar began in January – a gross departure from how things had been handled previously. Before 45 BCE, the Roman calendar was historically a mess, with months from March to December (304 day year) separated by a long random winter made longer or shorter at the whim of legislators who might like to extend or prematurely cut off the administration of a certain ruler. I say this to illustrate that the specific dating of anything to the Julian (and by obvious extension, the modern Gregorian) calendar before 45BCE is purely wishful thinking. Equating dates between one culture and another until just before the time of Messiah is nigh impossible, except in the cases of recorded astrological phenomena. Hence, in historical volumes of this era, we see things narrowed down to a few years or, if we are fortunate, a couple of months within

a given year.

Our second problem: Until the deification of Julius Caesar in 42 BCE, almost no one cared about when anyone was born ([the notable exception being Egypt](#)). People cared about knowing when great deeds happened, and when great men died; they didn't give a fig for anyone's birthday unless it was associated with some great astronomical or historical event – otherwise, it didn't warrant a mention. With the advent of the Imperial Cult, the birthdays of the Ceasars became public celebrations – but this was very new in the time of Messiah. It was so new, in fact, that scholars are fairly certain that Herod Antipas was not celebrating his birthday in Matt 14, but instead his regnal anniversary (after all, the day he came to the throne was more important than being born – no honor in being born, but becoming King? Oh yeah.) Besides Horus and Osiris – in the link provided above – not a single one of the birthdates claimed in memes like the one above, are actually recorded – and for the overwhelming majority, aren't even commemorated.

Horus and Osiris – now this meme claims they were born on the same day – but, in fact, they were born on the first and third epagomenal days of the Egyptian Calendar as I explained in the previous link (not considered part of the year, but extra days outside of time). In the version of mythology where they were brothers, their mother had been cursed with an inability to have children on any day of the year but, through some fancy finagling, managed to get five extra days inserted at the time of the inundation of the Nile, during the summer. So not only weren't they born on the same day, they were both born in the summer. As for the 3000 BC date – that is pure fiction. Egyptian records claim that the Pharaohs themselves went back much farther than that. As for the charge that either one of them were born of a virgin – that strikes out as well. In the most well known of Horus/Osiris mythology (the myths with no birthday mentioned at all), [Horus's parents were married](#),

which generally discourages virginity and Isis was never portrayed as a virgin.

Attis of Phrygia – no birthday found anywhere. He castrated himself and wore a funny hat, and his priests castrated themselves as well. I think the only reason he was chosen for this list is because his mother was impregnated by an almond – which I suppose could be equated with a virgin birth. He was also one of the “dying gods” whose departure from the world marked the death of vegetation over the winter months.

Krishna – this one is popularly on such lists because somehow Krishna sounds enough like Christ that they want him included. However, [the non-pagan origins of Christos in Greek Jewish writings](#), including the Septuagint version of the Scriptures (3rd century BCE), is well established. Krishna’s birthday is actually celebrated on Janamashtami, in the Hindu month of Shraavana (August/September on our calendar). So this one is just flat out manufactured when there is perfectly good information already out there, as was the case with Horus and Osiris. Like Horus, Krishna’s parents were also married – no virgins here. The date of 1400 BCE is problematic as I am unaware of any mentions of this god before the first millennium BCE.

Zoroaster – now this guy, Zarathustra, was actually a real historical figure – a Persian prophet. No one knows when the heck this guy was actually born – sometime between the mid-second and mid-first millennium BCE. His parents were, again, married, sexually active – and both human. He was never worshiped (Ahura Mazda was the diety he preached) but founded the religion of Zoroastrianism. His birthday is now commemorated on the sixth day after the Persian New Year, and falls on March 26th or 28th each year on a holiday known as Khordad Sal. He is venerated as a prophet.

Mithra of Persia – (as opposed to Roman Mithras) – I am just going to link this [article by the undisputed Mithra/Mithras](#)

[expert Roger Beck](#) – but no birthday, and he sprang to life fully adult from a rock (although I have no reason to doubt the rock's virginity). I also wrote about Mithras and the problems with Mithras speculation [here](#). Another related scholarly article is here about the related [Sol Invictus](#).

Heracles – (original name of Hercules) – this dude's mom was definitely not a virgin – she unknowingly had relations with Zeus, who was disguised as her husband. The Greeks celebrated the date of his death as Heracleia, in late July/early August, but not his birth. Remember that, until Caesar, birthdates were largely irrelevant and would only be mentioned with respect to signs in the sky or other great events, but not referenced with dates. The 800 BCE date on this one is bizarre – Herodotus claimed that Heracles lived 900 years before his own era, so roughly 1300 BCE.

Dionysus – worshipped beginning in the second millennium BCE by the Mycenians and better known by his later Roman name of Bacchus. Herodotus dates his mortal mother Semele's life at around 2000 BCE. She had an affair with Zeus, knowing he was Zeus – so not a virgin either. But this is only one of the legends, in others the mother of Dionysus was Persephone, Queen of the Underworld. Like the Egyptians, the Greeks sometimes had regional origin stories. The weird thing about the date on this meme is that it is 186 BCE – the year that the [Roman Senate prohibited the festival of Bacchanalia](#). So they used a legitimate date tied to Dionysus, but utterly misrepresented it.

Tammuz – I wrote an [extensive blog on the very misrepresented Tammuz here](#), so I won't go into great detail on this one. But 400 BCE? Ezekiel 8 has Tammuz being worshiped in the Temple, which was destroyed in 586 BCE – how on earth could he be born two hundred years later? And how could a Babylonian god who had a summer month named after him have his birthday celebrated on a calendar date that didn't exist yet, by a still backward nation? Rome wasn't even founded until 753 BCE,

and at this point, Babylon and Rome were, for all intents and purposes, as far away as two countries could get while still being considered part of the known world. Yes, even mighty Rome was once a pathetic little backwater nation.

Adonis – born 200 BCE? I have seen an aryballos from the fifth century BCE with Adonis pictured on it, so again, I have no idea where this date comes from or why there would be a claim that the Greeks would be celebrating one of their gods' birthdays according to the Roman calendar. There are many Adonis origin stories, most notably that which involved the incestuous union between his mother and grandfather, but none of them list a birth date. The only festival in his honor was Adonia, celebrated by women in the spring or summer (greatly disputed), commemorating his death. Again, they focused on how great men/demigods died.

Hermes – again – 400 BCE. How can we take seriously the claim that an ancient Greek god was only 400 years older than Messiah? In the 8th century BCE, Homer included Hermes in the Iliad. No birthdate is ever associated with him – but the Hermea festival was celebrated in his honor during the month of Hermaios (in poleis that had that month, not all did) – the timing of which varies according to the ancient regional calendars (as I mentioned previously, each region had its own separate calendar until the creation of the Thessalian calendar during the Roman era).

Prometheus – “born at the beginning of mankind” – in Greek legend he was the Titan who actually made mankind out of clay. That this birth supposedly happened on December 25th is undocumented and unsubstantiated historically. His parents were married and he was only one of their four children so, again, not a virgin birth either even though some memes make that claim. Not only wasn't his mom a virgin, but she was also seeing Helios on the side.

Finally – I don't know of a single scholar who thinks Yeshua



was born in June, and especially not sure why the 16th – now, in 2008 some astronomers made that claim, but it is hardly worthy of claims to scholarly consensus. And the last line equates BCE with CE – I just can't even believe that someone would equate "Before Common Era" with "Common Era." It's like equating yesterday and tomorrow.

There are other accusations floated around with this December 25th myth that are just as baseless- [Nimrod](#), Buddha, etc. – but I didn't want to post memes from actual ministries so as to not humiliate them – I wanted to go to the source, and the source of all this is atheism. Sadly, believers have been spreading atheist propaganda in order to undermine Christmas at any cost, and so are unknowingly spreading what amounts to anti-missionary literature, undermining faith in the Jewish Messiah, instead of simply teaching the Biblical Feasts of the Lord. As a result, knowledge of the Feasts, even among those who try to keep them, is abysmal. Hey, I used to do this too – but then I started legitimately studying ancient Near Eastern and first-century world history, religion and culture. The stuff I was repeating had no correlations with the copious amounts of archaeological evidence at our disposal. In fact, over the past 150 years, our knowledge of the ancient world has exploded. It is our responsibility to study before we teach, and especially when those teachings include accusations of idolatry – a death penalty offense in the Bible. In the Bible, anyone who falsely witnessed against their neighbor with regards to a death penalty offense would themselves face the death penalty. We cannot accuse people of idolatry when we have no solid proof, or even remotely plausible theories. I trust God, His Messiah, His Word, and the integrity of His Feasts – I don't need to lift propaganda from discredited sources. I take God's laws very seriously.

Deuteronomy 19 <sup>15</sup> "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two



witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. <sup>16</sup> If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, <sup>17</sup> then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. <sup>18</sup> The judges shall inquire diligently, and **if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, <sup>19</sup> then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.** <sup>20</sup> And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. <sup>21</sup> Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”