



# Thursday Thought

by Pastor Myron D. Atkinson

## “Did Jesus really exist?”

Thursday November 2, 2017

**Verse for the week: Luke 2:1-2 (NLT) “At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria).”**

I walked into the UPS store yesterday and they were putting Christmas Decorations up. We just celebrated Halloween, Reformation Day, and All Saints day and we still have Thanksgiving ahead. They aren't the only ones. Stores have been getting their Christmas merchandise out and gearing up for the season for at least a month. Stores love Christmas because American's spend 465 billion dollars\* on gifts, decorations, and goodies. I love Christmas too with all the decorations and festivities. It's the time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Okay, before people begin arguing with me that Jesus wasn't born on December 25<sup>th</sup>, I am aware. Actually we don't know when He was born. Some scholars believe it was in the fall and others in the spring. We don't know exactly, but we Christians have been celebrating Christmas since December 25, 336 A.D. when the Emperor Constantine declared Christianity the empire's religion.

That's a long time to celebrate someone's birthday. But did Jesus really exist? Recently someone made a post on Facebook about the Bible being fiction and then someone else commented that Jesus doesn't exist outside of the Bible. Could it be that this person who changed history, changed the calendar, and has changed people's lives really didn't exist?

So, is there any record of Jesus existing outside the Bible? The answer is a resounding YES! Jewish historian Flavius Josephus and Roman politicians Pliny and Tacitus all refer to Jesus Christ, as well as the Babylon Talmud and Lucian, a Greek satirist. Our faith as Christians is not built on fiction, but on facts, and the facts prove that Jesus Christ did exist. I could go on and on but I won't. There are books (here is a top ten list: <http://reasonabletheology.org/top-10-apologetics-books/>) and websites (here is one: <http://apologeticspress.org/>) devoted to apologetics and I would encourage every believer to dig in and know the facts behind what they believe.

Whew... I'm thankful that I still get to celebrate Christmas, and if anyone has a problem doing it on December 25<sup>th</sup>, they should probably begin celebrating it 365 days a year. Actually, that's what we all should do, and one day everyone, even those who think the Bible is fiction, will celebrate because The Bible says in **Romans 14:11 (NLT) “As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God.”** I think we should start celebrating his birth, life, death, and resurrection now! What about you?

**Question to ask yourself:** Have you ever questioned your faith? I have and it's reassuring to know it's based not just on faith but facts also! What will you do to educate yourself on the facts today ?

**\*Interesting fact:** The National Retail Federation estimates. If that money was spent entirely on US made products it would create 4.6 million jobs. <http://abcnews.go.com/WN/mailform?id=14998335>