

WHEN WAS JESUS BORN?

by David M. Hargis and MBI

Note from Pastor Kevin: I agree with the author of this article, except that he cannot be absolutely sure of the exact date of John the Baptist's conception and birth (and therefore Jesus' birth), without some assumptions and conjecture. However his assumptions are most likely true. I have taken the liberty to change the author's use of Hebrew words for names and places into English so you can understand it better.

I. The Conception of John the Baptist - Luke 1:5-25

When the angel, Gabriel, appeared to Zacharias as he was ministering in the Temple, it was during the ministration of Abijah. This order of priests ministered in the Temple the eighth week of the Hebrew year according to the ordinance of 1Chronicles 24:10 (and according to the Talmud). The eighth week transverses the last week of the second Hebrew month of Iyar and the first week of the third Hebrew month of Sivan, which culminates at Shavuot [Pentecost – Typically June on our calendars]. This is the anchor point for discovering the exact time of Messiah Jesus' birth. The angel promised Zacharias that his prayer had been answered, and when he went home to his wife Elizabeth she conceived, it seems almost immediately [an assumption on the author's part]. This puts the conception of John the Baptist very near the time of Shavuot, the Feast of Pentecost, in the second week of the month of Sivan, the third Hebrew month.

II. The Conception of Jesus - Luke 1:26-55

Then, at the close of the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary. Gabriel told Mary about Elizabeth, saying "she who was called barren is six months pregnant," This would be the last of the ninth Hebrew month called Kislev at the time of Chanukah. There are 27 weeks between the end of discourse of Abijah and the start of Chanukah (Dedication), which is celebrated eight days, from Kislev 25 to Tevet 2.

Mary accepts the word of the angel concerning the conception of Messiah in her, and she immediately rushes from Nazareth to the home of Elizabeth and Zacharias in the Judean mountains close to Jerusalem, about a three days journey from Nazareth. Mary was probably going there to celebrate Chanukah and to help Elizabeth with her pregnancy, as well as to talk to Elizabeth about the angel's visitation.

Upon Mary's greeting to Elizabeth, Elizabeth responds to Mary, calling her "the mother of my LORD". This demonstrates that Mary was already pregnant with Jesus. Thus, Jesus was conceived at Chanukah [an assumption by the author, I would say "most likely conceived"], the

Festival of Lights, for He is the Light of the World.

Sometimes the time of Chanukah falls close to Christmas. The apostate Roman church of medieval times combined the pagan winter solstice in late December with the 25th of Kislev (Chanukah) to create Christmas (Christ's Mass) on December 25. Supposedly, this was to celebrate Christ's birth.

Jesus is shown celebrating Chanukah in John 10:22-23. It is at this celebration that He declares "I and My Father are One" [John 10:30], which testifies to His Divine origin in His conception. It also reinforces Chanukah as the time of His conception.

Historically, then, it is more accurate to celebrate Jesus entering the world through conception at Chanukah rather than to celebrate His birth at Christmas. As we shall show, Christmas is not the birthday of Christ. (In fact, Christmas is an invention resulting from religious compromise with pagan tradition. Christmas only has harmony with the truth, in that it falls approximately at the time of year when Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.)

III. The Birth of John – Luke 1:56-80

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for three months, which was until the birth of John the Baptist. Since a full pregnancy term is 41 weeks, and 27 weeks makes up the first six months (two trimesters), which is exactly the time from the discourse of Abijah to Chanukah, that leaves 14 weeks to accomplish the last trimester and bring the pregnancy to full term. There are exactly 14 weeks from Chanukah to Passover (Nisan 14-22). Therefore, John the Baptist was born at Passover. He was circumcised on the eighth day, which would be the last day of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread. Gabriel had said that John would "go forth" in the strength and power of Elijah [Luke 1:17]. Jewish teaching was that Elijah would come again at Passover (this is still a tradition of Judaism today).

IV. The Birth of Jesus - Luke 2

Nisan, when John the Baptist was born, is the first month of the Hebrew year. As we have shown, Mary conceived six months after Elizabeth conceived, which means Jesus' birth would have to come six months after John's birth, during the seventh Hebrew month of Tishri. Since we know that John was born at Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread, we learn the time of Jesus' birth by counting six Hebrew months from Passover. The Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on Nisan 15 and six months later Tabernacles begins on Tishri 15. Therefore, Jesus was born on the first day of Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles).

The first day of Tabernacles is a Sabbath rest, so it fits that Joseph and Mary planned their journey to Bethlehem so they would finish their journey before the festival Sabbath. They found lodging just in time.

Concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, the LORD commanded that Israel should observe it eight days. They were to build temporary dwellings

called a sukkah and dwell in them [Leviticus 23:34-43]. These sukkahs were erected to house families with some bare comforts and food for the eight days. Food was placed in a stall or a crib for storage in the tabernacle. The King James Bible calls this food crib a manger. Jesus was not born in a barn, but rather in a temporary tabernacle which had been built for the celebration. He was placed in a "manger", demonstrating in a type that He is the Bread of Life from heaven. [The author is making another stretch here. The Bible says in Luke 2:7 "and she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." It does not say that they made a Sukkah tabernacle with a food storage bin. Had there been room in the Inn, Mary would have stayed there. It is not the King James bible that says Jesus was laid in a manger, but the use of the greek word phatne (fat'-nay) meaning a crib (for fodder)]

The eighth day, Jesus was circumcised according to the scriptural command [Luke 2:21]. For a male, this is what accomplishes a full Hebrew birth. The Feast of Tabernacles is for exactly eight days. The first and last days are both holy Sabbaths. Jesus was born on the first day, a holy Sabbath, and circumcised on the eighth day, a holy Sabbath. Evidently, God intended this entire Feast of Tabernacles to be set aside in order to accomplish and celebrate Jesus birth into the world.

Note that God provided two holy feasts that lasted eight days, Passover/Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Messiah, was born and circumcised in the eight days of the first, then six month later Jesus, the Messiah, was born and circumcised the eight days of the second. John came in the first month of the year and Jesus came in the seventh month. In ministry, John introduced the way through Messiah and then Jesus perfected it, even as the first and seventh months signify.

V. Conclusion

In my opinion, this chronology provides us with the exact day of Jesus' birth, Tishri 15, according to the Hebrew calendar (October 18, 2005). The Hebrew calendar is kept updated to this modern day, and every year the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) is absolutely set from Tishri 15 to Tishri 22. Because the Hebrew calendar is based on the course of the Moon (Lunar) and the modern calendar is based on the course of the Sun (Solar), the two move in relation to each other. This means the Feast of Tabernacles will always occur somewhere between mid-September and mid-October, but not on the exact same Gregorian dates every year. For instance, in 1995 the Feast of Tabernacles was October 9-October 17, but in 1996 the Feast of Tabernacles was September 28-October 5. While this is initially confusing to the unlearned mind, a combination Gregorian/Hebraic calendar will easily clarify how the dates relate. Many local funeral homes provide free Hebrew calendars each year showing the modern dates for the holy Feast Days (ask for a Jewish calendar).

It may help you to understand the seeming movement of Jesus birthday by looking at your own birthday. Even though your birthday might keep the same number year after year, the day of the week it falls on changes. In like manner, Jesus' birthday is on the same Hebraic calendar number each

year, Tishri 15, but in relation to the Gregorian calendar it changes. However, you can plan for His birthday to always occur sometime between the latter part of September and the early part of October.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a most important commemoration. Zechariah 14:16,17 tells us that one day all nations will be required by law to honor this feast. For what greater reason, than it is [likely] the birthday of the King of Kings! Why should we delay?