

# HOLY DAYS OR HOLIDAYS???

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*THE TRUE BIBLICAL FEAST DAYS FOR THE  
NEW TESTAMENT BELIEVER*

## PART TWO: THE BIRTH OF MESSIAH



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## INTRODUCTION

Most Bible scholars and many everyday Believers realize that December 25 is a very unlikely possibility for the Messiah's birth. As personally experienced by the author, the month of December is very cold in the land of Israel. Yahoshua, himself, alluded to this fact when He said, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter..." (Matthew 24:20). Consequently, it is highly unlikely that Joseph would have taken his very pregnant wife (Luke 2:5) on the long journey--approximately 80 miles--from Nazareth to Bethlehem in the dead of winter. And of course, the shepherds would not have had their flocks in the fields by night (Luke 2:8) in the dead of winter. They are housed in enclosed shelters beginning in the late fall when the weather starts to get cold. But if the Messiah was not born on December 25th, when was His birth? And how did we come to celebrate it on that day? Was it simply a date that was picked by the Church? And does any of this really matter?

As the reader might imagine after having read Part One of *Holidays or Holy Days*, the real birthday of our Messiah is revealed in the pages of Scripture as one of our Creator's Appointed Times. This should come as no surprise, because the date on which the Savior of mankind was born is surely one which our Heavenly Father would have given us to commemorate. As we will soon discover, the true Biblical date of this event is important to our Creator and directed by Him to be observed forever. It was undoubtedly observed by first century Believers before the influence of pagan Rome hid it from our sight. Let now us take a look into the pages of Scripture and see if we can determine which of the Almighty's Appointed Times it was. We shall look for our first clue to the New Testament book of Luke.

### **The Conception of John the Immerser (Baptizer)**

From the account given in the first chapter of the book of Luke, most Believers are aware that John the Immerser was conceived six months before the conception of Messiah Yahoshua. But, if we look deeper, we will find that Luke points us to the actual date of John's conception and, derivatively, to the date of Messiah Yahoshua's conception and birth as well. While our search will appear somewhat complex at first, we will find that it picks up momentum once some of the basics are established. Much like unraveling the plot of a spy novel, we will find that the climax is quite exciting and confirms the truth and consistency of the Word of our Creator. And now, into the book of Luke:

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachariah<sup>1</sup>, of the course of Abijah: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth<sup>2</sup>. And they were both righteous before Elohim, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of Yahowah blameless. And they had no child,

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrew pronounced "zek-ar-yaw." Meaning: "Remembrance of Yahowah"

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew pronounced "el-ee-sheh-bah." Meaning: "My Elohim is an oath" or "My Elohim of [the] oath"

because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before Elohim in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of Yahowah... And there appeared unto him an angel of Yahowah standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zachariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zachariah: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John<sup>3</sup>... And Zachariah said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of [Elohim]; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their appointed time. And the people waited for Zachariah, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months... (Luke 1:5-25)

While we have all read this passage countless times, countless times we have missed some seemingly insignificant, but very important details. The first of these is found in verse 5 where we are told that Zachariah was a temple priest of the course of Abijah.<sup>4</sup> To find out exactly what this means, we will briefly look into a few aspects of the Levitical priesthood.

As it turns out, there were 24 divisions (or courses) of the priesthood as enumerated in I Chronicles 24:1-19.<sup>5</sup> Each course served for a week at a time and transferred responsibility to the next course on the Sabbath day (2 Chronicles 23:8). After this 24-week period, the process would begin again. Thus, each course would serve two times per year, approximately 6 months apart. While this accounts for only 48 weeks of the year, the other four weeks are not forgotten. During the three major pilgrimage feasts of Passover/Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, all men were required to go to Jerusalem to present themselves before Yahowah (Deuteronomy 16:16).

Because of the tremendous number of people in Jerusalem during the pilgrimage feasts and the corresponding increase in the number of sacrifices, the normal priestly courses were interrupted and all of the temple priests worked in the temple during those periods. In other words, during

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<sup>3</sup> Hebrew pronounced "yo-khaw-nawn." Short form of "yah-ho-khaw-nawn." Meaning: "Favor of Yahowah"

<sup>4</sup> Hebrew Pronounced "ab-ee'-yah." Meaning: "My Father is Yah" (see Psalm 68:4)

<sup>5</sup> The original courses were set up by King David. After the return from the Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the Temple, the courses were again established (see Ezra 6:18).

these feasts, the priests "did not...wait by course" (2 Chronicles 5:11). Each priest, therefore, would perform Temple duties on five different occasions in a given year: during both of the two weeks in which his particular course performed its duties, and during the three pilgrimage feast days when all priests served, as shown below.

<b>24 Courses X 2 Weeks</b>	<b>= 48 Weeks</b>
<b>Plus 3+ Weeks for Appointed Times</b>	<b>= 4 Weeks</b>
*(Passover -- 1+ weeks)	
(Pentecost -- 1 week)	
*(Tabernacles -- 1+ weeks)	
	<b>= <u>52 Weeks</u> = <u>1 Year</u></b>
* Because the priests changed out on the Sabbath, the priests might serve 2 weeks for a 1-week Appointed Time, as we will see later on the calendars	

We now see that Gabriel could have visited Zechariah during one of five possible occasions. Trying to figure which of five possible times would be a very difficult task indeed. But the Bible narrows the field for us considerably by giving us another very important detail. To see these, let take another look at the book of Luke:

And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before Elohim in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot<sup>6</sup> was to burn incense when he went into the temple of Yahowah. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of Yahowah standing on the right side of the altar of incense.  
[emphasis added] (Luke 1:8-11)

While we saw earlier that Zechariah was of the course of Abijah (verse 5), we now know that Gabriel's appearance was not during one of the pilgrimage feasts when the priests "did not...wait by course." On the contrary, Gabriel appeared during one of the two regular weeks for the course of Abijah when Zechariah performed his duties in the order of his course. Armed with these details, we should be able to determine the exact time of the year that Zechariah was in the temple.

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<sup>6</sup> We find in Nehemiah 10:34 that certain duties associated with the Temple were determined by casting lots. It is reasonable to assume that other specific duties of individual temple priests were likewise determined.

We know that the course of Abijah was the eighth course of the priesthood (1 Chronicles 24:10) and, as we have already seen, each priestly course served for a week at a time. The course of Abijah would therefore be the eighth such course. But when was the yearly starting point of the priestly courses? Once again, the Bible gives us the answers.

Our first clue comes in the Book of Exodus, where we are told that Moses was to set up the tabernacle on the first day of the first month (Nisan)<sup>7</sup> of the Biblical year.

And Yahowah spake unto Moses, saying, On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation. [emphasis added]  
(Exodus 40:1-2)

And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month that the tabernacle was reared up. [emphasis added] (Exodus 40:17)

The Book of Numbers then goes on to describe, in great detail, the activities performed to dedicate the tabernacle and to eventually begin the priestly duties therein. In order to prevent any confusion as to the timing of these activities, the Scripture faithfully specifies the very day that they began.

And it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them; That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, who *were* the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered, offered: And they brought their offering before Yahowah, [emphasis added] (Numbers 7:1-3)

We know from Exodus 40:17 that "the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle and had anointed it" was the first day of the month of Nisan. This, then, becomes our starting point in the Book of Numbers for calculating the beginning date for the service of the priesthood.

The Bible tells us that after the tabernacle was set up and anointed on Nisan 1, the Almighty then directed princes from each tribe of Israel to bring offerings to the Levites because of the priestly services that they would begin to perform. (Numbers 7:4-5). These offerings were to be made for the dedication of the altar of the tabernacle and, again, the Word of the Almighty lays out the timing of this operation in great detail.

And Yahowah said unto Moses, They shall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar. (Numbers 7:11) And he that offered his offering the first day [Nisan 1] was Nahshon the son of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah:

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<sup>7</sup> The first month of the Biblical calendar is "the month of Nisan" (Esther 3:7). Prior to the Babylonian exile it was called "Abib" (Exodus 34:18; Deuteronomy 16:1).

(Numbers 7:12)... On the second day Nethaneel the son of Zuar, prince of Issachar, did offer: (Numbers 7:18)... On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, *did offer*: (Numbers 7:24)... On the fourth day Elizur the son of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, *did offer* (Numbers 7:30)... On the fifth day Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, *did offer* (Numbers 7:36)... On the sixth day Eliasaph the son of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, *offered* (Numbers 7:42)... On the seventh day Elishama the son of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, *offered* (Numbers 7:48)... On the eighth day *offered* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh (Numbers 7:54)... On the ninth day Abidan the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, *offered* (Numbers 7:60)... On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, *offered* (Numbers 7:66)... On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, *offered* (Numbers 7:72)... On the twelfth day Ahira the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, *offered* (Numbers 7:78).

This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed, by the princes of Israel... [emphasis added] (Numbers 7:84)

So, we find that the dedication and anointing of the alter occurred on the twelfth day of the month of Nisan. It was not until later in this day, after the anointing of the Levites (Numbers 8:10), and the purification of the Levites (Numbers 8:21) that they went into the tabernacle to begin their priestly service:

And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as Yahowah had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them. [emphasis added] (Numbers 8:22)

The Biblical ecclesiastical calendar is cyclical with all ordinances beginning on the same lunar date every year. The priestly service, therefore, would begin each year on the twelfth day of the Biblical month of Nisan. We must then determine the date on our western calendar upon which the twelfth of Nisan fell in the year that the angel visited Zechariah in the temple. We will then be able to plot the beginning of the priestly service and calculate the dates of the service of the course of Abijah. From that point, it will be a fairly easy task to calculate the time of the conception of John the Baptist and derivatively the conception and birth of our Savior.

In determining the year of the birth of our Messiah, probably the most compelling work is a study entitled, The Star the Astonished the World by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D. Dr. Martin does an excellent job of sifting through all the Biblical and extra-Biblical clues to determine that the year

3 B.C.E. is the year of the birth of John the Baptist and of our Messiah.<sup>8</sup> Their conceptions occurred in 4 B.C.E. for reasons that will soon become evident.

We must now examine the twelfth day of the Biblical month of Nisan, in 4 B.C.E., as the beginning of the priestly courses that year. Before we continue our search, however, it might make it easier if we could convert that date into the equivalent date on the calendar to which we are accustomed, the Gregorian calendar. The noted experts, Parker and Dubberstein, in their work entitled *Babylonian Chronology*, show that Nisan 1 fell on the equivalent Gregorian calendar date of Thursday, March 29, 4 B.C.E.<sup>9</sup>

<b>MARCH, 4 B.C.E.</b>						
(Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	18	19	20	21
25	26	27	28	29 (Nisan 1)	30 (Nisan 2)	31 (Nisan 3)
*Date of Nisan 1 determined by Parker and Dubberstein						

<sup>8</sup> He further backs up this date with impressive astronomical research that shows that in that year, the exact events described in Revelation 12:1-2 were occurring in the heavens. Incidentally, this research is so compelling that planetariums all over the world (over 600 in the United States alone) have presented it in shows for the public. The Star that Astonished the World, Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., (Portland Oregon: A.S.K. Publications, 1991), p. 180. See ENDNOTE 2 for a brief discussion of Dr. Martin's Book.

<sup>9</sup> Babylonian Chronology, Richard Parker and Waldo Dubberstein, (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University Press, 1956), p. 45. See ENDNOTE 1.

Therefore, Nisan 12--the day that marked the annual beginning of the priestly service--fell on April 9, 4 B.C.E.

<b>APRIL, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Nisan 4)	2 (Nisan 5)	3 (Nisan 6)	4 (Nisan 7)	5 (Nisan 8)	6 (Nisan 8)	7 (Nisan 10) Sabbath (all Priests come to serve in anticipation of Nisan 12)
8 (Nisan 11)	9 (Nisan 12) (Yearly start of priestly service; all serve; not by course)	10 (Nisan 13)  All serve; not by course)	11 (Nisan 14) (Passover: pilgrimage feast; all serve; not by course)	12 (Nisan 15) (1 <sup>st</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	13 (Nisan 16) (2 <sup>nd</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	14 (Nisan 17) (3 <sup>rd</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)
15 (Nisan 18) (4 <sup>th</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	16 (Nisan 19) (5 <sup>th</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	17 (Nisan 20) (6 <sup>th</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	18 (Nisan 21) (7 <sup>th</sup> day of Unleavened Bread; all serve; not by course)	19 (Nisan 22)  All serve; not by course)	20 (Nisan 23)  All serve; not by course)	21 (Nisan 24) Sabbath: Course Chg—  1st Regular Course begins
22 (Nisan 25)  1st Regular Course serves	23 (Nisan 26)  1st Regular Course serves	24 (Nisan 27)  1st Regular Course serves	25 (Nisan 28)  1st Regular Course serves	26 (Nisan 29)  1st Regular Course serves	27 (Nisan 30)  1st Regular Course serves	28 (Iyar 1) Sabbath: Course Chg—  2nd Regular Course begins
29 (Iyar 2)  2nd Regular Course serves	30 (Iyar 3)  2nd Regular Course serves					

Numbers 8:22 suggests that this beginning day of Nisan 12 was manned by all the priests rather than just those of the first regular course/division. This makes perfect sense because two days later was Passover and seven days of Unleavened Bread which began on Nisan 14. We must also remember that during the pilgrimage feasts--such as Passover--the priests "did not wait by course" (2 Chronicles 5:11), but all served due to the large number of sacrifices that had to be offered. And in 4 B.C.E. there was no intervening weekly Sabbath between Nisan 12 and Nisan 14. Therefore the priests who were serving on Nisan 12 would also be serving on Nisan 14.

The first regular course/division of the priesthood would not have begun until the weekly Sabbath following the termination of Passover week. This Sabbath day was on April 21, 4 B.C.E. and it was on this day that the first regular course of the priesthood would have begun its exclusive duty in the Temple. The first course would have terminated and been replaced by the second course on the Sabbath day (April 28). The third course would then begin on the Sabbath day (May 5). The fourth course would begin on May 12. The fifth course would begin on May 19. The sixth course would then begin on the Sabbath day (May 26).

<b>MAY, 4 B.C.E.</b>						
(Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 (Iyar 4)	2 (Iyar 5)	3 (Iyar 6)	4 (Iyar 7)	5 (Iyar 8) Sabbath: Course Chg—
		2nd Regular Course serves	2nd Regular Course serves	2nd Regular Course serves	2nd Regular Course serves	3rd Regular Course begins
6 (Iyar 9)	7 (Iyar 10)	8 (Iyar 11)	9 (Iyar 12)	10 (Iyar 13)	11 (Iyar 14)	12 (Iyar 15) Sabbath: Course Chg—
3rd Regular Course serves	4th Regular Course begins					
13 (Iyar 16)	14 (Iyar 17)	15 (Iyar 18)	16 (Iyar 19)	17 (Iyar 20)	18 (Iyar 21)	19 (Iyar 22) Sabbath: Course Chg—
4th Regular Course serves	5th Regular Course begins					
20 (Iyar 23)	21 (Iyar 24)	22 (Iyar 25)	23 (Iyar 26)	24 (Iyar 27)	25 (Iyar 28)	26 (Iyar 29) Sabbath: Course Chg—
5th Regular Course serves	6th Regular Course begins					
27 (Sivan 1)	28 (Sivan 2)	29 (Sivan 3)	30 (Sivan 4)	31 (Sivan 5)		
6th Regular Course serves						

The following week, the priestly courses would be interrupted by the second of the yearly pilgrimage feasts--the Appointed Time of Shavuot [Pentecost].

All of the priests would, therefore, serve during the week of 2-9 June, 4 B.C.E. and the regular courses would resume again with the seventh course on June 9. The eighth course of Abijah--the course of Zechariah--would have begun on June 16 and terminated on June 23.

<b>JUNE, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 (Sivan 6)  6th Regular Course serves	2 (Sivan 7) Sabbath and Shavuot/ Pentecost.  All Priests serve
3 (Sivan 8)  All serve; not by course.	4 (Sivan 9)  All serve; not by course.	5 (Sivan 10)  All serve; not by course.	6 (Sivan 11)  All serve; not by course.	7 (Sivan 12)  All serve; not by course.	8 (Sivan 13)  All serve; not by course.	9 (Sivan 14) Sabbath: Course Chg—  7th Regular Course begins
10 (Sivan 15)  7th Regular Course serves	11 (Sivan 16)  7th Regular Course serves	12 (Sivan 17)  7th Regular Course serves	13 (Sivan 18)  7th Regular Course serves	14 (Sivan 19)  7th Regular Course serves	15 (Sivan 20)  7th Regular Course serves	16 (Sivan 21) Sabbath: Course Chg—  8th Regular Course begins
17 (Sivan 22)  ----- 8th Regular Course serves	18 (Sivan 23)  ---(Zechariah 8th Regular Course serves	19 (Sivan 24)  struck dumb 8th Regular Course serves	20 (Sivan 25)  during this 8th Regular Course serves	21 (Sivan 26)  period) ----- 8th Regular Course serves	22 (Sivan 27)  ----- 8th Regular Course serves	23 (Sivan 28) Sabbath: Course Chg—  8th Regular Course begins
24 (Sivan 29)  Zechariah Departs Jerusalem for his home in Hebron	25 (Sivan 30)  Travel Time 2nd Regular Course serves	26 (Tamuz 1)  Zechariah Arrives in Hebron	27 (Tamuz 2)  Probable conception of John the Immerser	28 (Tamuz 3)	29 (Tamuz 4)	30 (Tamuz 5) Sabbath

Sometime during the week of 16-23 June, the angel Gabriel appeared unto Zechariah, announced the birth of John, and struck Zechariah dumb for his disbelief (See Luke 1:11-20). Then follow a series of Biblical clues to the timing of the birth of Zechariah's son, John.

First, the Bible tells us that Zechariah he did not depart the temple immediately, but waited until the days of his priestly duties were over.

And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. [emphasis added] (Luke 1:23)

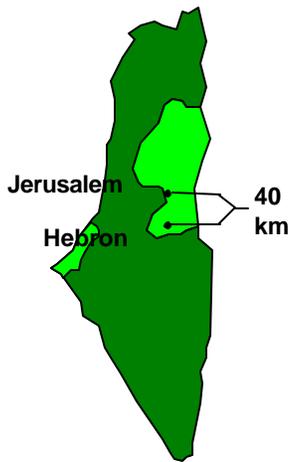
Since the duties of the course of Abijah terminated on the Sabbath, June 23, the earliest that Zechariah could have departed Jerusalem would have been Sunday, June 24, 4 B.C.E. The Bible then gives us another clue by telling us that Zechariah "departed to his own house." While the exact location of his house is not specified, it is located "in the hill country...of Judah."

And Miriam arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zechariah, and saluted Elisabeth. [emphasis added] (Luke 1:39-40)

Armed with this information, the exact city in which Zechariah can be inferred with a high degree of certainty. The Book of Joshua lists the towns which had been given as a possession to the Levitical priesthood--the sons of Aaron.

And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, these cities which are *here* mentioned by name, Which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: for theirs was the first lot. And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it. But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for his possession. Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer; and Libnah with her suburbs, And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, And Holon with her suburbs, and Debir with her suburbs, And Ain with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Bethshemesh with her suburbs; nine cities out of those two tribes. [emphasis added] (Joshua 21:9-16)

While there are nine cities listed, only the city of Hebron is described as being in the hill country of Judah--just as in Luke 1:39. Hebron, therefore, seems to be the most likely candidate for the location of the home of Zechariah. It is approximately 40 kilometers (24 miles) from Jerusalem, as shown below.



Knowing the location of his home, we must determine when he arrived there. We have already seen that Zechariah did not depart the Temple as soon as he was struck dumb but waited until after the termination of his Temple duties. Since the eighth course terminated on the Sabbath, 23 June, 4 B.C.E., the earliest date that Zechariah would have departed from Jerusalem for "his own house" would have been on Sunday, June 24. (Again, see calendar for June, 4 B.C.E.).

Because Zechariah was "well stricken in years" (Luke 1:7) and most probably traveling on foot, the journey of approximately 40 kilometers from Jerusalem to Hebron would likely have taken two or three days. If he arrived at his house on June 26 and rested before sharing the angel's proclamation with his wife, the conception of John the Immerser would

have occurred on or about Wednesday, June 27, 4 B.C.E. Since the normal gestation period of the human baby is forty weeks (280 days), the birth of John would have been on or about April 3, 3 B.C.E. (the calendars at the Appendix at the end of the study give a weekly progression of the gestation of John the Immerser).

The next clue we have as to the timing of the birth of our Messiah is that He was conceived in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy.

Then said Mary [Miriam] unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of [Elohim]. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with Elohim nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of Yahowah; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. And Miriam arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; And entered into the house of Zachariah, and saluted Elisabeth. [emphasis added]  
(Luke 1:34-40)

The first thing to notice is that the angel did not come to Miriam until it was "the sixth month" of Elisabeth's pregnancy. This means that Miriam could not have been pregnant before that time. Notice also that Miriam did not hesitate to go to Elisabeth but "arose in those days and went...with haste." These words were obviously given to show the reader that she began traveling in that same month--"in those days"--to see her cousin. And finally, we find that Miriam was already with child at the point of her arrival at the home of Elisabeth.

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Miriam [Mary], the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she

spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb. And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. (Luke 1:41-44)

Notice that Elisabeth did not say, "blessed *will be* the fruit of thy womb." She said, "blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb" indicating that Miriam was already pregnant. Elisabeth further confirmed this fact when she called Miriam the "mother of my Lord" indicating that she was presently the mother of the Messiah. These verses clearly show that the conception of our Messiah was six months after the conception of John the Baptist. Since John was conceived on or about the first day of the fourth month (now called "Tammuz"), the Messiah must have been conceived on or about the first day of the tenth month ("Tevet"), according to the following calendars.

<b>JULY, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 John's Gestation 1st Week	5	6	7 Sabbath
8	9	10	11 John's Gestation 2nd Week	12	13	14 Sabbath
15	16	17	18 John's Gestation 3rd Week	19	20	21 Sabbath
22	23	24	25 (Av 1) John's Gestation 4th Week	26	27	28 Sabbath
29	30	31				

## AUGUST, 4 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> John's Gestation 5th Week	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Sabbath
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> John's Gestation 6th Week	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Sabbath
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> John's Gestation 7th Week	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Sabbath
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> John's Gestation 8th Week	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> Sabbath
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> John's Gestation 9th Week	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	

## SEPTEMBER, 4 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b> Sabbath
<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> John's Gestation 10th Week	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Sabbath
<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> John's Gestation 11th Week	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> Sabbath
<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> John's Gestation 12th Week	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Sabbath

23	24	25	26 John's Gestation 13th Week	27	28	29 Sabbath
30						

<b>OCTOBER, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 John's Gestation 14th Week	4	5	6 Sabbath
7	8	9	10 John's Gestation 15th Week	11	12	13 Sabbath
14	15	16	17 John's Gestation 16th Week	18	19	20 Sabbath
21	22	23	24 John's Gestation 17th Week	25	26	27 Sabbath
28	29	30	31 John's Gestation 18th Week			

<b>NOVEMBER, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Sabbath
4	5	6	7 John's Gestation 19th Week	8	9	10 Sabbath

11	12	13	14 John's Gestation 20th Week	15	16	17 Sabbath
18	19	20	18 John's Gestation 21st Week	19	20	21 Sabbath
25	26	27	28 John's Gestation 22nd Week	29	30	

<b>DECEMBER, 4 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Sabbath
2	3	4	5 John's Gestation 23rd Week	6	7	8 Sabbath
9	10	11	12 John's Gestation 24th Week	13	14(Kislev 25)  1st Day of Hanukkah	15 Sabbath
16	17	18	19 (Tevet 1) John's Gestation 25th Week Conception of Messiah	20 (Tevet 2)  7th Day of Hanukkah	21	22 Sabbath
23	24	25	26 John's 26th Week Messiah's 1st Week of Gestation	27 End of Elizabeth's 6th Month	28	29 Sabbath
30						

As we can see, 6 months from the conception of John the Immerser brings us to the first day of the tenth Biblical month<sup>10</sup> of “Tevet,” the probable day of the conception of the Messiah. And this assumption is indeed a reasonable one for the following reasons.

Just as the conception of Messiah was the first glimmer of hope for a lost world, the first day of the tenth month brought the first glimmer of hope for Noah and his family that they would again see dry land. It was on this day that the mountain tops first appeared above the flood waters.

And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. [emphasis added] (Exodus 8:5).

Even in Jewish tradition, the first day of the tenth month seems to carry a particular significance. For example,

Among certain Sephardic [Hebrew] communities girls would gather on the 7th night of Chanukah, which is Rosh Chodesh Tevet,<sup>11</sup> for a special holiday known as “The Girls’ Holiday” or “Women’s Rosh Chodesh.”<sup>12</sup>

While the origins of this custom are the subject of some speculation, one legend attributes them to a Hebrew woman who “at her own wedding ceremony”<sup>13</sup> motivated the restoration of the honor of the Hebrews which had been brought to shame by the pagan influences of Hellenism. Likewise, Miriam’s total submission to the will of the Almighty by agreeing to be the mother of the Messiah displayed courage similar to the legendary actions above. And indeed, the feast of Chanukah derives from the rededication of the Temple after the abominable sacrificing of a swine upon the altar by the Hellenists under direction of Antiochus Epiphines. And in a sense, the Almighty, Himself, performed a rededication of a human temple when He, by means of His Holy Spirit, implanted into Miriam’s womb the Savior of the World on the first day of the tenth month.

We will now test the assumption that Messiah’s conception occurred on the eve of the first day of the tenth month. If we count 40 weeks forward from that day, we come to the first day of the Appointed Time of Tabernacles (September 25, 3 B.C.E.) according to the following calendars:

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<sup>10</sup> Incidentally, the month “December” gets its name from “deca” meaning “ten.” Before our calendar was “solarized” December used to be the tenth month.

<sup>11</sup> “Rosh Chodesh Tevet” means the eve of the first day of the month Tevet (tenth month). As explained in Part One of Holidays or Holy Days, “Rosh Chodesh” means “head of the month” which is the first day of the new month. It is determined by the first appearance of the sliver new moon for the month.

<sup>12</sup> Arlene Angus, “Examining Rosh Chodesh: An Analysis of the Holiday and its Textual Sources,” Celebrating the New Moon, ed. Susan Berrin, (London: Jason Aaronson Inc., 1996), pp. 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

## JANUARY, 3 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 John's 27th Week Messiah's 2nd Week of Gestation	3	4	5 Sabbath
6	7	8	9 John's 28th Week Messiah's 3rd Week of Gestation	10	11	12 Sabbath
13	14	15	16 John's 29th Week Messiah's 4th Week of Gestation	17	18	19 Sabbath
20	21	22	23 John's 30th Week Messiah's 5th Week of Gestation	24	25	26 Sabbath
27	28	29	30 John's 31st Week Messiah's 6th Week of Gestation	31		

## FEBRUARY, 3 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Sabbath

3	4	5	6 John's 32nd Week Messiah's 7th Week of Gestation	7	8	9 Sabbath
10	11	12	13 John's 33rd Week Messiah's 8th Week of Gestation	14	15	16 (Adar 1) Sabbath
17	18	19	20 John's 34th Week Messiah's 9th Week of Gestation	21	22	23 Sabbath
24	25	26	27 John's 35th Week Messiah's 10th Week of Gestation	28		

<b>MARCH, 3 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Sabbath
3	4	5	6 John's 36th Week Messiah's 11th Week of Gestation	7	8	9 Sabbath

10	11	12	13 John's 37th Week Messiah's 12th Week of Gestation	14	15	16 (Adar 1) Sabbath
17	18	19	20 John's 38th Week Messiah's 13th Week of Gestation	21	22	23 Sabbath
24	25	26	27 John's 39th Week Messiah's 14th Week of Gestation	28		

<b>APRIL, 3 B.C.E.</b>						
(Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 BIRTH OF JOHN Messiah's 15th Week of Gestation	4	5	6 Sabbath
7	8	9	10 Messiah's 16th Week of Gestation	11	12	13 Sabbath
14	15	16	17 Messiah's 17th Week of Gestation	18	19	20 Sabbath
21	22	23	24 Messiah's 18th Week of Gestation	25	26	27 Sabbath
28	29	30				

## MAY, 3 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Messiah's 19th Week of Gestation	2	3	4 Sabbath
5	6	7	8 Messiah's 20th Week of Gestation	9	10	11 Sabbath
12	13	14	15 Messiah's 21st Week of Gestation	16	17	18 Sabbath
19	20	21	22 Messiah's 22nd Week of Gestation	23	24	25 Sabbath
26	27	28	29 Messiah's 23rd Week of Gestation	30	31	

## JUNE, 3 B.C.E.

(Before the Common Era)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Sabbath
2	3	4	5 Messiah's 24th Week of Gestation	6	7	8 Sabbath
9	10	11	12 Messiah's 25th Week of Gestation	13	14	15 Sabbath
16	17	18	19 Messiah's 26th Week of Gestation	20	21	22 Sabbath

23	24	25	26 Messiah's 27th Week of Gestation	27	28	29 Sabbath
30						

<b>JULY, 3 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Messiah's 28th Week of Gestation	4	5	6 Sabbath
7	8	9	10 Messiah's 29th Week of Gestation	11	12	13 Sabbath
14	15	16	17 Messiah's 30th Week of Gestation	18	19	20 Sabbath
21	22	23	24 Messiah's 31st Week of Gestation	25	26	27 Sabbath
28	29	30	31 Messiah's 32nd Week of Gestation			

<b>AUGUST, 3 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Sabbath
4	5	6	7 Messiah's 33rd Week of Gestation	8	9	10 Sabbath

11	12	13	14 Messiah's 34th Week of Gestation	15	16	17 Sabbath
18	19	20	21 Messiah's 35th Week of Gestation	22	23	24 Sabbath
25	26	27	28 Messiah's 36th Week of Gestation	29	30	31 Sabbath

<b>SEPTEMBER, 3 B.C.E.</b> (Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Messiah's 37th Week of Gestation	5	6	7 Sabbath
8	9	10	11 Messiah's 38th Week of Gestation	12	13	14 Sabbath
15	16	17	18 Messiah's 39th Week of Gestation	19	20(Tishri 10) Day of Atonement	21 Sabbath
22	23	24	25(Tishri 15) MESSIAH'S BIRTH 1st Day of Tabernacles	26 2nd Day of Tabernacles	27 3rd Day of Tabernacles	28 Sabbath 4th Day of Tabernacles
29 5th Day of Tabernacles	30 6th Day of Tabernacles					

Because John was born on or about March 20, 3 B.C., the Messiah was born six months later--some time just after September 20, 3 B.C.E. Within ten days either side of this date occurred three of Elohim's "Appointed Times": the feast of Trumpets (September 11, 3 B.C.E.), the Day of Atonement (September 20, 3 B.C.E.), and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (September 25, 3 B.C.E.). In the event that the Messiah's birth did occur on one of these days, which one would it have been?

## The Biblical Birthday of Messiah

The New Testament Scriptures contain several clues, which will enable us to zero in on the particular "Appointed Time" on which the birth of our Savior occurred -- the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. We will first look to the book of John

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. [emphasis added] (John 1:14)

As several modern study Bibles point out, the word "dwelt" in this passage is the Greek word "σκηνοω" which means "to dwell in a temporary dwelling" or to "tabernacle." *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* describes it as

4637. σκηνοω, **skenoō**, *skay-no'-o*; from 4036; to *tent* or *encamp*; i.e. (fig.) to *occupy* (as a mansion) or (spec.) to *reside* (as [Elohim] did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion):-dwell.

In other words, John 1:14 is explaining for us that Messiah's presence here on the earth in a human body was analogous to His dwelling in a tabernacle of flesh -- similar to Sha'ul's [Paul's] reference to his own body as a fleshly tabernacle in the book of 2 Corinthians.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is Elohim, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: [emphasis added] (2 Corinthians 5:4-6)

Another indication that the passage in John 1:14 is referring to the Appointed Time of the Feast of Tabernacles can be found if we look to the Septuagint<sup>14</sup> rendering of Leviticus 23:42. In this verse -- which explains that the children of Israel are to dwell in tabernacles during the Feast of Tabernacles -- the same Greek word "σκηνοω" is used that we find in John 1:14. But the clues do not end there.

Probably the most significant New Testament clue is found in Chapter 2 of the book of Luke.

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<sup>14</sup> The Septuagint (from the Latin word "septuaginta," meaning "seventy") is the Greek Translation of the Old Testament. The name derives from the tradition that the translation was done by seventy Jewish scholars at Alexandria, Egypt during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.E.).

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of Yahowah came upon them, and the glory of Yahowah shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Messiah the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising Elohim, and saying, Glory to Elohim in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Miriam, and Yosef, and the babe lying in a manger. [emphasis added] (Luke 2:7-16)

We are told three times in this passage that the Messiah was lying "in a manger." And the usual comments on these verses center around the humble manner in which the Savior of the World made His entrance into human history. If we look closely at verse 12, however, we see a strong indication that the Messiah's "lying in a manger" was more than simply an indication of His humble entrance into the world.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. [emphasis added] (Luke 2:12)

The fact that the shepherds were to find a babe "wrapped in swaddling clothes" was nothing out of the ordinary because newborn babes are usually wrapped in some type of "swaddling clothes" following their birth. Therefore, the fact that this newborn infant would be lying in a manger was somehow to be a significant sign to them. But just what was the writer of the book of Luke trying to tell us here? The message is a pretty exciting one and pinpoints the birth of the Messiah exactly to the Appointed Time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

We will begin by looking at the focus of this sign--the manger. The Greek word , according to Dr. Strong, is:

5336. φατνη|**phatne**, *fat'-nay*; ...a crib (for fodder)--manger, stall.

A manger is a box in which feed for horses or cattle is placed. And it was indeed such a trough in which the Messiah was laid; but why would this be a "sign" unto Jewish shepherds of the arrival of their Messiah?

The Bible itself gives us the answer to this question. A manger (feed trough) is found in an enclosure or shelter for domestic farm animals. In English we might refer to such a shelter as a stable. When we look to the Biblical term, however, we indeed begin to understand why the Messiah's "lying in a manger" was to be a sign to the Hebrew shepherds. And it was no accident that the Almighty chose Hebrew shepherds for this revelation!

While we have all been taught that the revelation of the Savior's birth was made to shepherds because they were "lowly" or "humble," that is only part of the story. A group of little old cleaning ladies might have been a much more humble target and a small group of orphans would certainly have been more lowly. Shepherds were chosen for a very specific reason. Of all people, they were the most familiar with the practices associated with domestic farm animals. This is a key point, as we will now see.

In the book of Genesis we find the following passage:

And Jacob [Yakov] journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.  
(Genesis 33:17)

The Bible tells us here that the place Yakov settled, Succoth, was given its name because of the shelters or "booths" he built for his domestic animals. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* defines the term as

5523. **טִּבְּוֹת** **ṭibbōth**, *sook-kohth'*; plur. of 5521; booths; *Succoth*, the name of a place in Egypt and three in Pal.: --Sukkoth.

Notice that Sukkoth is the plural of Strong's #5521 which is described as follows:

5521. **הַסֻּכָּה** **hassukkah**, *sook-kaw'*; fem. of 5520; a hut or lair: booth, cottage, covert, pavilion, tabernacle, tent. [--Sukkah.]

So the word "Sukkah" was used in Biblical times in Palestine to describe the type of shelters built for cattle and similar domestic livestock. And it was in such a "sukkah" that feeding troughs (mangers) were to be found. So, when the shepherds went to look for the newly born King of the world laying in a manger, they would have been looking for Him to be in a "sukkah."

With this important piece of information, we can now look back to Leviticus to see how a babe lying in a manger inside a "sukkah" was to be a sign to the Hebrew shepherds. Speaking of the Appointed Time of Tabernacles, the Almighty tells Moshe,

And ye shall keep it a feast unto Yahowah seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye

shall dwell in booths [sukkoth] seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths [sukkoth]: That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths [sukkoth], when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am [Yahowah] your [Elohim]. [emphasis added]  
(Leviticus 23:41-43)

We find in this passage that the Almighty three times commands His people to dwell in sukkoth on the Appointed Time of Sukkoth. To Hebrew shepherds, therefore, the birth of a baby in a sukkah announced by angels would be a truly significant sign indeed! But why?

If we look to the book of Zechariah, for example, we see that the Appointed Time of Sukkoth is the appointed time that represents the Almighty and His Messiah “tabernacling” with man on the earth-- in this case commemorating the time when the Messiah will reign as King from Jerusalem during the millennium:

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahowah of hosts, and to keep the feast of [sukkoth]. [emphasis added]  
(Zechariah 14:16)

The fact that the shepherds were to find a newborn baby lying in a manger in a sukkah on the first day of the Appointed Time of Sukkoth was a sign to them that their Messiah had come into the world! This will become even more clear as we look deeper into the meaning of this appointed time.

### The Appointed Time of Sukkoth (Tabernacles)

After the Israelites moved into the Land of Palestine, it was during this particular Appointed Time that the Israelites were to leave the comfort of their normal dwellings and to move into a temporary dwelling under the stars. They were to remember that they although they were in the world, they were not of the world. This dwelling in temporary tabernacles was to remind them that they were sojourners in a world of sin, dependent upon their Elohim.

Ye shall dwell in sukkoth (tabernacles) seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in sukkoth (tabernacles): That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in sukkoth (tabernacles), when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am Yahowah your Elohim. And Moshe declared unto the children of Israel the Appointed Times of Yahowah. (Leviticus 23:42-44)

But the command to leave the comfort and convenience of permanent earthly dwellings and to go out with the bugs and snakes was not to be a time of sorrow. On the contrary, it was to be a

time of great rejoicing. As a matter of fact, it is the only of the Appointed Times of God where rejoicing was mandatory!

And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before Yahowah your Elohim seven days. [emphasis added]  
(Leviticus 23:40)

This Old Testament directive was doing more than simply mandating that the participants were to have fun during the feast. As we have seen, but unbeknownst to most of the Israelites of that day, observance of this particular Appointed Time foreshadowed the birth of the Savior of the World. And this event was to give the world a true reason to be joyful. This joy was later announced by the angels as they announced to the shepherds the birth of their Savior.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Messiah the Lord. [emphasis added]  
(Luke 2:10-11)

The Appointed Time of Tabernacles is the very embodiment of the presence of the Messiah. Not only did He leave the comfort, convenience, and glory of His heavenly abode to come to earth and dwell in a temporary earthly "sukkah", but His future millennial reign will also be signified by this Appointed Time.

And it shall come to pass, *that* every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the [appointed time] of sukkoth (tabernacles).  
(Zechariah 14:16)

And the Appointed Time of Tabernacles will be relevant even after the Millennial Reign when the earth and heavens are created anew without the presence of sin and death.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from Elohim out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of Elohim is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and Elohim himself shall be with them, *and be* their Elohim. [emphasis added] (Revelation 21:1-3)

We see again that the dwelling of Elohim and His Messiah with men is typified by the Yahowah's Appointed Time of Tabernacles. This Appointed Time, therefore, is not simply for Jews, but for all the children of the Almighty.

In general, our Father tells us in Leviticus 23:41, that this feast "shall be a statute forever in your generations..." He did not tell us to keep it until the coming of the Messiah and then to do away with it, as many of us have been taught. But if the Almighty Creator of the universe told us to keep the feast forever, is there some significance for us as modern-day believers?

There are a couple other significant clues about the exact nature of this Appointed Time. The first clue is the number of days of the feast.

Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Yahowah seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. [emphasis added]  
(Leviticus 23:39)

Notice that the seven-day feast is bracketed by a sabbath on the first day and on the eighth day. What the English word "sabbath" does not accurately convey, however, is the nature of these two sabbaths. The regular Hebrew word for sabbath is "shabbat". This word means a "day of rest" and is defined by Strong's as follows:

7676. **שַׁבָּת**; **shabbâth**, *shab-bawth'*; intens. from 7673; intermission, i.e. (spec.) the Sabbath:--(+ every) sabbath.

The Hebrew word used for "sabbath" in the above verse is not **שַׁבָּת**; **shabbâth** (Strong's 7676). It is, rather, "shabbaton" and is defined by Strong's as follows:

7677. **שַׁבְּתוֹן** **shabbâthôwn**, *shab-baw-thone'*; from 7676; a shabbatism or special holiday: rest, sabbath.

A "shabbaton" is a special sabbath that carries a particular significance. As New Testament Believers, we can easily see why our Creator would designate the first day of Sukkoth -- the birthday of the Savior of the world--as a truly special day, a "shabbaton." But why is the eighth day of the Appointed Time of Tabernacles also a special sabbath, a shabbaton?

## THE EIGHTH "GREAT DAY"

Like every other Hebrew male child, the eighth day of Yahoshua's life was an extremely special day on which He was brought into the Covenant promised centuries earlier to His father, Abraham.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be an Elohim unto thee and thy

seed after thee... And Elohim said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every manchild among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you.  
(Genesis 17:7-11)

The New Testament tells us that Yahoshua was in fact circumcised, and named, on the eighth day.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the Child, his name was called YAHOSHUA, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb. [emphasis added] (Luke 2:21)

<b>OCTOBER, 3 B.C.E.</b>						
(Before the Common Era)						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1  7th Day of Tabernacles	2 MESSIAH'S CIRCUMSIS- ION 8th Day of Tabernacles	3	4	5 Sabbath
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Sabbath
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Sabbath
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 Sabbath

27	28	29	30	31		
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The fact that Yahoshua was circumcised and received His name on the eighth day of the Appointed Time of Sukkot is no coincidence. After all, He was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev 13:8) and everything that happened to Him was done to fulfill the Scriptures.

It is widely recognized in mainstream Christian circles that our Messiah was able to be the perfect offering for our sins because He was able to keep the commandments of the Law (Torah)<sup>15</sup> perfectly. Messiah's name, Yahoshua, means "Yahowah will save" and proclaims that He is our Savior sent by His Father, Yahowah.<sup>16</sup> Technically speaking, Messiah could not begin to be our Savior until He came into the Covenant and begin to keep the Law perfectly on our behalf. As Paul stated,

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin.  
(Hebrews 4:15)

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of Elohim in him. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

For not the hearers of the law *are* just before Elohim, but the doers of the Torah shall be justified. (Romans 2:13)

And none of us are really doers of the Torah. Yahoshua alone obeyed the Torah perfectly and He alone was justified by the Torah. So the Almighty makes a way for us for us to be saved because Yahoshua, the Seed of Abraham, fulfills the Torah's demand for perfection and He purchased our righteousness, our justification, through His shed blood.

For all have sinned and come short of the glory of Elohim, Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Messiah Yahoshua: Whom Elohim] hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his

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<sup>15</sup> The word "Law" in this case is used to describe the "Law of Moses," which is enumerated in the first five books of the Bible. These first five books are known to most Christians by the Greek word "Pentateuch." The original Hebrew word for the Law, however, is "Torah." It is this term that will be used from here on.

<sup>16</sup> The variant "Yahshua" means "Yah will save" and is in widespread use among Messianic Believers in Messiah. Notice the very deep meaning of Matthew 1:21. For a more in-depth discussion, see the study [What's in a Name?](#)

righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of Elohim. (Romans 3:23-25)

We see then the reason that Messiah's circumcision was so important to the world is that until His circumcision and His entry into the covenant relationship that had been passed down from Abraham, we could have had the hope of being saved. And the eighth day of the Appointed Time of Sukkot is a beautiful picture of that salvation. After 7 days, we leave our 7 days of wilderness walking in the Sukkah, and on the 8th day we come back into the comfortable living of our homes. Yahoshua the very fulfillment of every promise and prophecy of the Torah, brings us back home....a picture of our glorious inheritance of our heavenly home.

So, the eighth day of the Appointed Time of Sukkot—the day on which Messiah formally announced His status as Savior of the world through His circumcision and naming—is truly a day worthy being established as a Shabbaton and a day of mandatory rejoicing by our Creator!

### **BUT, WHAT ABOUT DECEMBER 25?**

We have seen that the Appointed Time of Sukkoth (Tabernacles) is the true birthday of our Savior. But since most of the world celebrates His birth on December 25, is there anything wrong with observing that day?

It is not the desire of the author to dwell on negative issues, especially after having just discussed two of the most joyful days in the Almighty's plan for our salvation. One would be remiss, however, if he were to leave the reader with no information about the day currently celebrated by the Christian world as the birthday of the Savior of the world. So, a very brief discussion will follow and the reader is strongly encouraged to pray about the matter and to do his/her own further research, if desired.

Not only have we discovered the true birthday of our Savior, but the Bible itself indicates the impossibility of a December birth. As mentioned in the beginning of this study, not only would Joseph not have taken his very pregnant wife (Luke 2:5) on the long journey--approximately 80 miles--from Nazareth to Bethlehem<sup>17</sup> in the dead of winter, but also the shepherds would not have had their flocks in the fields by night (Luke 2:8) in the dead of winter. So, how have we come to celebrate December 25?

The answer to this question lies with Rome. Just as the Messiah's true name, Yahoshua, was changed into the Latin/Greek "Jesus" due to the influence of pagan Rome,<sup>18</sup> we have been

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<sup>17</sup> Note of Interest: "Bethlehem" in Hebrew is pronounced "Bet-Lechem" meaning "House of Bread." Our Savior, the Bread of Life (John 6:35), was literally born in the "House of Bread."

<sup>18</sup> See the study "What's in a Name???"

deceived into celebrating a very pagan holiday for the same reason. As noted in the Encyclopedia Britannica,

One of the best-known festivals of ancient Rome was the Saturnalia, a winter festival celebrated on December 17-24. Because it was a time of wild merrymaking and domestic celebrations, businesses, schools, and law courts were closed so that the public could feast, dance, gamble, and generally enjoy itself to the fullest. December 25--the birthday of Mithra, the Iranian god of light, and a day devoted to the invincible sun, as well as the day after the Saturnalia--was adopted by the church as Christmas, the nativity of Christ to counteract the effects of these festivals. [emphasis added]<sup>19</sup>

So just who was Mithra, the Iranian god of light? A small amount of research into the mystery religions which came out of Babylon reveal that Mithra is none other than Tammuz, the son of Nimrod<sup>20</sup> and his wife, Semiramis. Following the death of Nimrod, Semiramis deified him and proclaimed her son, Tammuz, as savior. Alexander Hislop, in his well-known work, The Two Babylons, notes,

This son, thus worshipped in his mother's arms, was looked upon as invested with all the attributes, and called by almost all the names of the promised Messiah. As Christ, in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, was called Adonai, The Lord, so Tammuz was called Adon or Adonis. Under the name Mithras, he was worshipped as the "Mediator."<sup>21</sup>

The Bible mentions the worship of Tammuz and indicates that it is abominable to our Creator,

He said also unto me, Turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations that they do. Then he brought me to the door of the gate of Yahowah's house which *was* toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen *this*, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, *and* thou shalt see greater abominations than these. (Ezekiel 8:13-15)

So, if the worship of Tammuz is abominable to our Creator, and if December 25 was the date celebrated by the pagan world as his birth, why would we want to celebrate the birth of the real Savior on that date? The prevailing opinion among Bible scholars seems to be, "Yes of course December 25 had pagan origins, but we won it for the Lord!"

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<sup>19</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., s.v. "Rites and Ceremonies, Carnivals and Saturnalias" in Macropaedia, Vol 26.

<sup>20</sup> Nimrod is mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 10:8.

<sup>21</sup> Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons, (England: A&C Black, LTD., 1916; reprint ed., Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1959), p. 70

But is that really what happened? Did we really win a pagan day for the Lord or are we simply rationalizing our own observance of a pagan holiday which gives glory to a minion of Satan? After all, did not our Creator admonish His people not to participate in such activities?

When thou art come into the land which Yahowah thy Elohim giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. (Deuteronomy 18:9)

And we see that our Creator was quite displeased when His people carried out such actions. If we look again to the book of Ezekiel, we find that the Almighty rendered a strong rebuke to the nation of Israel for such actions.

Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean ..., and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and **I am profaned among them** [emphasis added] (Ezekiel 22:26)

So on one hand, we have the true Biblical birth of our Savior given in the Bible as a day to be observed “for ever in your generations” (Leviticus 23:41). On the other hand, we have December 25, a pagan holiday brought into our calendar by Rome. We would probably do well to remember the warning given by our Savior, Himself,

But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matthew 15:9)

## CONCLUSION

This study has shown several facts about the birth of the promised Messiah. First, the actual Biblical date of His birth can be determined from the pages of Scripture by means of numerous specific details penned by the sacred writers. Second, we have seen that the date of His birth is one of Appointed Times of our Creator which was established during the creation week—the first day of the Appointed Time of Tabernacles.<sup>22</sup> Third, we have seen that our Father mandated observance of His Son’s birth “for ever in your generations” (Leviticus 23:41). Had Rome not hidden these Appointed Times from our eyes by labeling them as “Jewish Holidays” with no importance to New Testament Believers, we would automatically be observing His true Biblical birth by keeping the Appointed Time of Sukkoth (Tabernacles).

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<sup>22</sup> It must be noted here that although Messiah was born on the solar day of September 25, 3 B.C.E., that date is not the true yearly commemoration of His birth. As we have seen, the actual yearly commemoration of Messiah’s birth falls on the first day of the Appointed Time of Tabernacles, which does not occur on the same solar day every year. It occurs, rather, on the fifteenth day after the new moon of the seventh Biblical month of Tishri. The date of this event every year is easily determined by getting a standard Jewish or Messianic ecclesiastical calendar

We have also learned that the date given to us by Rome was not institutionalized until the 4<sup>th</sup> century and is actually the birthday of Tammuz of Babylon, the first false messiah.

And finally, we have still another indication that the Word of our Creator is true and consistent from beginning to end. If we live our life—as our Savior directed—by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Elohim” (Matthew 4:4), we will be well on our way to recovering faith “once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). May the Almighty richly bless you in these efforts!

## ENDNOTES

1. Parker and Dubberstien add the Intercalary month of Adar II on March 18, 3 B.C.E. which would have the effect of pushing all following events back one month. Intercalary years were added approximately 7 times in a 19-year period in order to synchronize the lunar and solar calendars. In Biblical times, the Sanhedrin would examine the ears of barley on the day upon which Nisan 1 fell (The first Biblical month “Nisan” was originally called “Abib” meaning “green ears.”). If the ears were not properly green due to it being too early, the Sanhedrin would proclaim the month of Adar II rather than Nisan. Nisan would then occur at the next new moon. Since Parker and Dubberstein were not there to observe the barley ears ever Nisan 1, their dates are only based upon astronomical calculations rather than actual observance of the new moon each month. Galatians 4:4 states that Messiah was sent forth “when the fullness of the time was come.” It is the author’s opinion that the intercalary Adar II actually fell in the following year. It appears that Dr. Ernest Martin came to the same conclusion in his study, The Star That Astonished the World (see above).

2. *A Star the Astonished the World*, by Dr. Ernest Martin, is a book worth having on one’s bookshelf. It ties together events in Palestine with those occurring in Rome during the years spanning the time of the birth of Yahoshua of Nazareth. Dr. Martin examines the reign of Emperor Augustus, his 25<sup>th</sup> jubilee and the associated award of the prestigious title of Pater Patria. Dr. Martin demonstrates that the census and oath of loyalty to Augustus in conjunction with this event, was the census for which Joseph and Miriam registered. Thus, Dr. Martin is able to reconcile other historical events (e.g. the solar eclipse spoken of by the historian Josephus and the governorship of Cyrenius) which had been virtually irreconcilable before his work.