

God's Everlasting Covenant

presents

The Feast of Tabernacles – Happy Birthday Jesus!

A number of Messianic Torah teachers make a good case for placing the birth of Yeshua during the Feast of Tabernacles. It is compelling because the Apostle John uses a word in the beginning of his gospel that is the equivalent of the Hebrew for “booth” or “tabernacle”.

Jn 1:14 And the Word (*Torah*) became flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father...

Dwelt = *Skenoo* #4637 to tent, encamp, to reside (as God did in the Tabernacle of old)

When did they begin to build the first tabernacle in the wilderness? On the Feast of Tabernacles! To prove this with the Scriptures would be another teaching in and of itself. For purposes of this study and brevity, we will present a rough timeline.

Nisan 14 – First Passover in Egypt

Nisan 15 – Israelites leave Egypt. They journey for 50 days.

Sivan 6 – Israel agrees to accept the Covenant at Sinai/Shavuot or Pentecost

Sivan 7 – Moses goes up the mountain to receive the Tablets. On mountain 40 days/nights.

Tammuz 17 – Moses descends, sees Golden Calf, breaks Tablets.

Tammuz 18 – Moses ascends to pray for forgiveness. On mountain another 40 days/nights.

Av 29 (eve of Elul 1) – God forgives the people. Moses descends to tell the people.

Elul 1 – Moses ascends to receive 2nd set of Tablets. On mountain another 40 days/nights.

Tishri 10 – Moses descends on Yom Kippur. Tells people to prepare to build the Tabernacle.

Tishri 15 – They begin building the Tabernacle.

On Nisan 14 the following year, the Tabernacle was completed and dedicated.

With Yeshua's birth, God came once again to tabernacle among men just as He had done with Moses and Israel in the wilderness. Let's begin our journey together in the gospel of Luke. I'm going to show you something that you have maybe wondered about. Most Christians just skip over it because they have no idea what it means. But you're going to know what it means! God doesn't waste any of His words, and if something is in the Scriptures, it is there for a purpose. Let's see...

Lu 1;5,8,9 In the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias (John the Baptist's daddy) of the course of Abijah, and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth (*Elisheva* in Hebrew). And it came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God 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 the LORD.

Have you ever wondered what time of year this took place? And what in the world is “the course of Abijah?” Well, I’m going to tell you...and it leads to some interesting conclusions about when John the Baptist was born, and from that, we can figure out when Yeshua was born.

So, John the Baptist’s daddy was a priest. The priests were divided into divisions or courses. Let’s go to 1 Chronicles.

1 Chr 24:1-2, 10, 19 Now, these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died, before their father and had no children; therefore, Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest’s office.

So, here we have the same phrase that is in our passage in Luke. Then the verses go on to explain how each of the priests ended up in their divisions or courses. They were divided by lots, and then starting in verse 7, we have the explanation of who was first, second, third, etc.

Go to verse 10: The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah...verse 19: These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner.

There were a total of 24 courses and the 8th went to Abijah. This ties us directly to our passage back in Luke 1.

On our calendar, there are 52 weeks in the year. Well, on the Jewish calendar there are 51 – slightly different. There were 24 courses or divisions of priests, and since there are 51 weeks, that meant that each division would serve for two weeks during the year. $24 + 24 = 48$. So this would mean there were 3 weeks left. Well, during three times each year, all the males came up to Jerusalem during Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. All the priests would minister during these times, so that covers the entire year. The priests would minister for one week, and then they would minister another week at another time during the year. They did not minister for two consecutive weeks. There would be some months of time in-between.

So, the first course started in the month of Nisan (which would roughly be our April).

1. Nisan 1-7 = first course (April)
2. Nisan 8-14 = second course (April)
3. Nisan 15-21 = Passover, so all priests would minister (April)
4. Nisan 22-28 = third course (April)
5. Nisan 29-Iyar 5 = fourth course (May)
6. Iyar 6-12 = fifth course (May)
7. Iyar 13-19 = sixth course (May)
8. Iyar 20-26 = seventh course (May)
9. Iyar 27-Sivan 4 = eighth course (June)
10. Sivan 5-11 = Pentecost/Shavuot (June)

But the eighth course was just before the Feast of Pentecost (Shavuot)...and then Zacharias would have ministered with all the priests, so it is very likely that he was ministering during the

Feast of Pentecost! Every priest wanted the opportunity to perform the incense offering, which was the most highly desired part of the service. Since there were more priests than there were opportunities for the offering, they drew lots for it. This service was the closest that a regular priest could get to the most holy place. It was the closest to God one could get. A priest would only be able to perform this service once in his lifetime. And after years of prayer, the lot fell to Zacharias!

Look at Luke 1:10-11 And the whole multitude of the people were praying at the time of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the LORD standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

The word “multitude” in the Greek is Strong’s #4128 *plethos* – it is the word from which we get “plethora”. It means a large number, throng, populace. Why was there such a huge multitude? Because this was taking place during Shavuot or Pentecost and Jerusalem was the most crowded with pilgrims and they were required to be there according to the Torah!

Then, when we read on in Luke:

Luke 1:23, 24 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.

So, right away when Zacharias’ time of ministering was over, he went home. And Elisabeth became pregnant with John the Baptist...and she was in seclusion for five months. That puts us in the month of Chesvan (November). Let’s count the months in order together:

- Month 1 (Sivan to Tammuz, June to July)
- Month 2 (Tammuz to Av, July to August)
- Month 3 (Av to Elul, August to September)
- Month 4 (Elul to Tishri, September to October)
- Month 5 (Tishri to Chesvan, October to November)
- Month 6 (Chesvan to Kislev, November to December)

Now, let’s look in Luke again.

Luke 1:26, 35, 36 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth; and the angel answered and said to her, the Holy Ghost will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore also, that holy thing that will be born of you will be called the Son of God. And behold, your cousin Elisabeth, she has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

So, here we have the angel visiting Miriam, announcing the conception of Yeshua in Elisabeth’s sixth month. That would be December, or the month of Kislev! I believe that Miriam conceived during *Chanukah* – the Festival of Lights!

Now in Luke 1:56 it says that Miriam (Mary) stayed with Elisabeth three months. Why would she do that? $6 + 3 = 9$. She waited until John the Baptist was born! This would have been about Passover (roughly April on our calendar).

Luke 2:6,7 And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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.

Over the centuries, Bible scholars have been speculating about why was there no room for them. Well, let's look at this. If Miriam was in her 3rd month when John the Baptist was born, what happens about six months after Passover? The Feast of Tabernacles! Why was there no room in the inn? Because all the Jews were in Jerusalem and overflowing into Bethlehem, which is about 2 miles away. And why were all the lodging places overflowing? Because it was the Feast of Tabernacles! If Yeshua was conceived on *Chanukah*, and you count nine months, that puts his birth on or during the Feast of Tabernacles!

He was wrapped in swaddling clothes. What in the world are swaddling clothes?

Swaddling clothes: #4683 *sparganoo* (meaning to strap or wrap with strips); to swathe (an infant after the Oriental custom)

Many of you may know that during the Feast of Tabernacles, there was an amazing celebration in the courts of the Temple. There was a huge light show every night.

At the end of the first day of the Feast, three eighty foot high golden candlesticks were set up in the Temple's Court of Women. Four golden bowls were placed on each candlestick, and four ladders rested against each. A youth of priestly descent stood at the top of each ladder, pouring oil from a ten-gallon pitcher into the bowl (Talmud: Sukkah 5:3) The worn-out liturgical garments of Priests were used for wicks. The light from these candlesticks was so bright that it was state, "There was no courtyard in Jerusalem that was not lit up with the light at the water-well ceremony" (Talmud: Sukkah 5:3).

So we see that it was the strips of priestly garments that were worn out and cut up into strips that served as the wicks for the lamps on the temple courtyard during the Feast of Tabernacles. Yeshua was wrapped in priestly garments when he was born!

The word for manger is a crib that the cattle ate out of. The Jews also built booths/succot for their animals. This is where Yeshua was born – in a succah, where the animals were. That's why he was laid in a manger!

He tabernacled with men, and light has come into the world!

Now, I know we have been taught that Yeshua was born in December. This is not possible. It is very cold in Israel in December. There is often snow. Nazareth is in the north of Israel, and it is mountainous. To get down to Bethlehem, it is 44 miles and through snowy mountains! Do you think a woman who is nine months pregnant is going to take a 44 mile trip through the

mountains, riding on a donkey? No way! He was not born in December. There would have been no shepherds with their flocks in the fields in the cold, snowy hills of Bethlehem! They wouldn't be feeding their flocks in the snow! Right after the feast of Tabernacles, they took all the sheep down to Bethlehem to put into the sheepfolds.

Let's look again at what Luke tells us with new "lenses" on our eyes:

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Tell me this. Do you like being taxed by the IRS? If you are the governor, are you going to send the people out three months after their harvest, when they have had time to hide all their wealth so they end up paying less taxes, or are you going to wait for them to come to you because they have all their wealth, all their harvest and money with them to bring before the LORD as He commanded? I think if you want to collect taxes, you would do it during the feast! This is another "clue" that helps to place Yeshua's birth during Tabernacles.

One of the main aspects of the holiday of *Sukkot* (Tabernacles) is the commandment to rejoice.

Deut 16:14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son, and your daughter, and your manservant and your maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless and the widow that are within your gates.

No matter who you were, you had to rejoice! Talk about a great party! The LORD determined there would be a party on His son's birthday, and everyone would rejoice! He had King David write the songs for His son's birthday a thousand years before He was born!

Ps 118:14-15, 21 The LORD is my strength and song, and is become my salvation <Yeshua>. The voice of rejoicing and salvation <Yeshua> is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the LORD does valiantly. I will praise you, for you have heard me and have become my salvation <Yeshua>!!!!

Look at the continuous theme here: rejoicing, salvation and tabernacles!

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

What were they supposed to do on the Feast of Tabernacles? Rejoice!!! This sounds like rejoicing to me. The shepherds are on the hills of Bethlehem, and they would be able to see the lights at the Temple. The people in Jerusalem would be watching all the celebration in the temple courtyard, with the priests, and they didn't even realize that while they were singing, their salvation had indeed come...in the city of David, was Yeshua the Messiah, the King!

Let's look at another interesting aspect of this time of year that fits perfectly with Yeshua being born at this time of year.

Num 29:35 On the eighth day, you will have a solemn assembly.

This “solemn assembly” is today known as *Shemini Atzeret* , the Eighth Day or *Simchat Torah*, rejoicing in the Torah.

What else does the Bible tell us happens on the eighth day? Let’s have a look.

Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your seed after you: Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Luke 2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Yeshua, which was so named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

So, Yeshua was brought on the eighth day to Jerusalem, to the Temple to be circumcised. On the eighth day of Sukkot, He is shedding His blood in the Temple (circumcision) confirming the covenant with Abraham.

Now, for one last connection:

Luke 2:22-24 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the LORD; (As it is written in the law of the LORD, every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the LORD, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

So, she is to present a pair of turtledoves or two pigeons. But this isn’t exactly what the Torah says. Luke is quoting the verse below in Leviticus.

Lev 12:6, 8a And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest; And if she can’t afford to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering and the other for a sin offering.

Miriam was commanded to bring a lamb to the Temple for a burnt offering, and two turtledoves or pigeons for a sin offering. But if she was too poor and she couldn’t afford a lamb, she could bring brought two turtledoves for her burnt offering. This tells us they were not a wealthy family. But guess what? Mary did have a lamb – she had the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world!!!