

THE CALL TO PRAYER



PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!

When was Yeshua born? *Christmas? Sukkot?*

Celebrating Messiah's birth in the accurate season is something the LORD has been challenging many to examine — not only because of the timing of His birth but also because of the sheer commercialism and paganism of Christmas. The date December 25th to celebrate the Nativity of Yeshua has never been universally accepted. According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, by the end of the 5th Century, most of the Western Church had adopted December 25th, **but** December 25th has never been considered accurate, because December 25th was the date when pagans celebrated the rebirth of the sun.



It is far more likely that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Tabernacles. What Biblical grounds do we have for making this statement? Beginning with

Luke 1:5 we learn that Zechariah*, John the Baptist's father, was on duty in the Temple when Zechariah was visited by the angel Gabriel. (*Elizabeth & Zechariah were righteous before the LORD, & observed all the LORD's Commandments & regulations blamelessly,' Luke 1:6.) If we assume that the priests did their two weeks of duty back-to-back, theologians tell us precisely what time of the year this happened. Luke states that Zechariah's division of the priesthood was that of Abijah.



In 1Chronicles 24:10, we read the sequence when each of the priesthood divisions took their turn on Temple duty and discover that Abijah's division had the eighth lot — meaning the second part of the fourth month of the Jewish Religious Year. Note there are two new years for Jews, one religious and one civil. The Religious Year was used in apportioning lots for Temple service. The Religious Year begins with the month of Nisan (March-April).

Assuming the first lot fell in mid-March, the 1st month of the Religious Year, Abijah's eighth lot fell halfway through the fourth month (mid-July to mid-August), which was when Zechariah was on duty. (Why would Luke want us to know this seemingly irrelevant detail? No details are in Scripture by accident. Luke obviously wants us to know when Zechariah was on duty.) After Zechariah finished his course of duty, he then returned to his home in Ein Kerem. After Zechariah's four days of abstinence, as dictated by the Torah, Elizabeth conceived their son, John, immediately because this was a divinely inspired conception. Theologians calculate that it was then the 116 day of the Religious Year.

Luke stated that Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit to conceive and bear a son, and she should call Him Yeshua. The angel Gabriel visited Mary and reassured her that "Even Elizabeth your relative, who was said to be barren, is in her sixth month."

Since Mary conceived Yeshua when Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy, the conception of Yeshua would have been in December. So, Yeshua was not **born** on December 25th, but rather he was **conceived** near or around that time in December!

Therefore, nine months later, our LORD would have been born in September-October, the time of the fall festival of the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).

Perhaps John 1:14 has this in mind, "And the word became flesh and 'tabernacled' among us..." And that is why the shepherds were watching over their flocks by night in the still relatively mild evenings of the Promised Land!