

The Birth of Yeshua During Sukkot¹

The Book of Luke establishes for itself credentials which are significant to every believer. Dr. Luke claims to have the accuracy of an eyewitness concerning details of the life and times of the Messiah. Here is how the “Good News” of Luke begins:

L¹ *Dear Theophilos:*

“Concerning the matters that have taken place among us, many people have undertaken to draw up accounts² based on what was handed down to us by those who from the start were eyewitnesses and proclaimers of the message. ³Therefore, your Excellency, since I have carefully investigated all these things from the beginning, it seemed good to me that I too should write you an accurate and ordered narrative.⁴ So that you might know how well-founded are the things about which you have been taught.” (Luke 1:1-4, CJB)

These carefully investigated accounts were given to us as an accurate and ordered narrative. Thus, it is in the narrative of Luke that we observe the details that help us establish the birth of Messiah *Yeshua* during the Feast of *Sukkot*. We will assume the reader has familiarity with the Jewish Calendar. By using the Jewish Calendar exclusively, we can establish the exact timing of the birth of the Messiah to be on or about the Feast of *Sukkot*—the additional day is called *Shemini Atzeret*.

“In the days of Herod, King of Y’hudah, there was a cohen named Z’kharyah who belonged to the Aviyah division. His wife was a descendant of Aharon, and her name was Elisheva.” (Luke 1:5, CJB)

Zechariah served in the temple at an appointed time twice each year—in the division or course of Abijah. These appointed times were called *divisions or courses* in the Hebrew Scriptures and are found in 1 Chronicles Chapter 24. King David himself made the appointments as follows:

“³David, together with Tzadok from the descendants of El’azar, and Achimelekh from the descendants of Itamar, arranged them in divisions for service. ⁴There were more men who were chiefs found among the descendants of El’azar than among the descendants of Itamar; therefore there were sixteen divisions of the descendants of El’azar, headed by clan leaders, and eight divisions of the descendants of Itamar, according to their clans.” (1 Chr 24:3-4, CJB)

“⁵They were assigned <periods of service> by lot, the one group equally with the other, since both the descendants of El’azar and the descendants of Itamar had officers of the sanctuary and officers of God. ⁶Sh’ma’yah the son of N’tan’el the secretary, one of the L’vi’im, recorded them in the presence of the king, the officers, Tzadok the cohen, Achimelekh the son of Evyatar, and the clan leaders of the cohanim and of the L’vi’im - with two clan divisions taken from El’azar for each one from Itamar. ⁷The first lot drawn was for Y’hoyariv, the second for Y’da’yah, ⁸the third for Harim, the fourth for S’orim, ⁹the fifth for Malkiyah, the sixth for Miyamin, ¹⁰the seventh for Hakotz, the eighth for Aviyah...” (1 Chr 24:5-10, CJB)

Each period of service was called a division or course in the KJV, corresponded to one week of ministry, twice each year beginning on the 4th week of Tishri (on the 23rd of Tishri, after *Shemini Atzeret*), after King *Shlomo* dedicated the Temple during the Feast of *Sukkot* (2 Chro 5:1-15; 7:1,2; 7:9-10)

“³All the people of Isra’el assembled before the king at the festival in the seventh month...¹¹When the cohanim came out of the Holy Place (for all the cohanim who were present had consecrated themselves; they didn’t keep to their divisions)” (2 Chr 5:3,11 CJB) {“did not then wait by course” KJV; “without regard to divisions” NASB}

“¹When Shlomo had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of יהוה filled the house, ²so that the cohanim could not enter the house of יהוה; because the glory of יהוה filled יהוה’s house.” (2 Chr 7:1-2, CJB)

⁸“So Shlomo celebrated the festival at that time for seven days, together with all Isra’el, an enormous gathering; <they had come all the way> from the entrance of Hamat to the Vadi <of Egypt>. ⁹On the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, having observed the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days. ¹⁰Then, on the twenty-third day of the seventh month, he sent the people away to their tents full of joy and glad of heart for all the goodness יְהוָה had shown to David, to Shlomo and to Isra’el his people.” (2 Chr 7:8-10, CJB)

The pattern of priestly ministering established by King David before the Temple was ever built and honored and perpetuated by King *Shlomo* was in effect at the time of *Yeshua*. The analysis that follows draws from the fact that if we establish when Zechariah was in the Temple in his course, we will know both when *Yochanan* the Immerser (John the Baptist) and *Yeshua* were both conceived and born.

The time of Zechariah's first biannual ministration in the Temple during the eight course, the course of Abijah, was during the later part of the Jewish month of *Kislev*, which corresponds roughly to the 1st week of December in our calendar. His second biannual ministration was during the 3rd week of the month *Sivan*, which corresponds to the 1st week in June in our calendar. We know that Zechariah was in his 2nd biannual ministration from the words of the Angel Gabriel in Luke 1:8-23. The Greek phrase translated “...the days of his ministration were accomplished...” in the KJV clearly indicates that he had finished his duty for the year (he was finished with his 2nd biannual course).

²³“When his period of his Temple service was over, he returned home.” (Luke 1:23, CJB)

Now we know that *Elisheva*, Zechariah’s barren and aged wife was to conceive "miraculously" and thus, John the Baptist is conceived in the beginning of the 4th week of *Sivan* (our 2nd week in June). *Elisheva* then hid herself for five months.

²⁴“Following this, *Elisheva* his wife conceived, and she remained five months in seclusion, saying, ‘Adonai has done this for me; he has shown me favor at this time, so as to remove my public disgrace.’ ²⁵In the sixth month, the angel Gavri’el was sent by God to a city in the Galil called Natzeret.” (Luke 1:24-25, CJB)

After *Elisheva* was six months pregnant with John the Baptist, the Angel Gabriel was sent unto *Miryam*, the espoused wife of *Yosef*, and announced to her:

³⁰“The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, *Miryam*, for you have found favor with God. Look! ³¹You will become pregnant, you will give birth to a son, and you are to name him *Yeshua*.” (Luke 1:30-31, CJB)

³⁵“The angel answered her, ‘The Ruach HaKodesh will come over you, the power of HaElyon will cover you. Therefore the holy child born to you will be called the Son of God.’ ³⁶‘You have a relative, *Elisheva*, who is an old woman; and everyone says she is barren. But she has conceived a son and is six months pregnant! ³⁷For with God, nothing is impossible.’ ³⁸*Miryam* said, ‘I am the servant of Adonai; may it happen to me as you have said.’” (Luke 1:35-38, CJB)

Thus, *Yeshua* is conceived six months after *Elisheva* conceived, during the 4th week of *Kislev*, (*Channukah* starts on the evening of *Kislev* 25) corresponding roughly to the beginning of our 2nd week in December. BTW, John the Baptist is born 3½ Jewish months after *Miryam* conceived, on or about *Passover*. The human gestation period is 40 weeks or 280 days. This was not an ordinary human pregnancy but a “Perfect, Spirit-led, Spirit-induced and Spirit-directed pregnancy” therefore, we can safely conclude that exactly at the end of the 40 weeks, *Yeshua* is born of *Miryam* in *Beit Lehem* (lit. house of bread), on or about the first day of 3rd week of *Tishri*. This is the beginning of *Sukkot* (the Feast of Tabernacles) in Scripture on 15th day of *Tishri*.

“But on the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered the produce of the land, you are to observe the feast of יְהוָה seven days; the 1st day is to be a complete rest and the 8th day is to be a complete rest .” (Lev 23:39)

ⁱ The summary in this message was developed by A. A. Arroyo in April 1981. For a similar exposition see <http://www.tikkunministries.org/newsletters/mm-oct05.asp>