

THE EIGHT DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

The birth of Messiah is celebrated all over the world on December 25th each year. It is common knowledge that Messiah wasn't born on this day, but most Christians shrug and say; "Well we don't know His actual birth date so this day is as good as any". Many have come to understand that the December 25 date originally came from the Roman Emperor Constantine and his attempt to merge Christianity with a traditional Roman pagan celebration of the birth of the sun god. The December 25 date also coincides closely with the Winter Solstice, which has been the subject of religious observance for eons.

I have come to believe firmly through a lot of revelation and scriptural truths that Messiah was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (see Leviticus 23). Tabernacles is one of the Fall feast days and this year (2005) occurred in late October. This fits very closely with a lot of truths and what I believe is the day that GOD would choose for this blessed event. First, this would be the timing for the birth of the lambs in and around Bethlehem that were to be utilized in the temple as the Passover sacrifice. It is well known that this region was utilized for this purpose. Messiah also, as the Passover Lamb, would be born in this place during this time. Can't you just hear the cries of the new born infant on the hills around Bethlehem blending with the bleating of the new born Passover Lambs? Secondly, the feast of tabernacles is observed by the dwelling in "booths" during the celebration. From biblical accounts, it is clear that Mary and Joseph (whether on purpose or not) were true to the observance of this feast. With HIS birth on this day, Messiah also observed the feast. Many have come to believe that the Fall feast days will be ultimately fulfilled with the coming of Messiah and that Tabernacles represents the beginning of the millennial reign of Messiah or when He "tabernacles" with HIS people on earth. What better time for GOD to choose to have Messiah begin HIS "tabernacle" with HIS people at HIS first coming? In addition to all of the above, Tabernacles is a seven day feast terminated on the eighth day with the feast of completion. From scripture we know that Messiah dwelled in booths for seven days and on the eighth day was taken by HIS parents to the temple in Jerusalem and was circumcised. HIS rite of passage into this world as a Hebrew baby was fulfilled or completed by this act. The symbolism here is too powerful to be ignored or to simply be coincidence.

Okay, I'm convinced; Messiah was born on the first day of Tabernacles in the year of HIS birth. So, why is this important that we know this? To answer this question requires a journey. A few years ago, after realizing the true birth date at Tabernacles, I began to attempt to fit the other feast days into the story. If we count all the way back to the conception of Messiah as Mary was overshadowed by the Spirit of YHWH GOD, we find that the first day of the Jewish festival of lights or Hanukkah is perfectly placed for this purpose. Hanukkah is also an eight day celebration, so I discovered immediately that GOD had eight day "bookends" at the conception and birth of Messiah. The number eight in scripture is generally

recognized to be the number of new beginnings. How fitting are these eight day festivals to frame the conception and birth of Messiah? Only GOD and HIS wisdom could imagine such a thing. Delving deeper into this mystery, I was astounded to discover that in human fetal development, on the eighth day after the egg is fertilized, it is finally implanted in the uterus. The process is completed in eight days. It began to occur to me that Messiah in HIS conception and birth was faithful to observe the biblical celebrations. What about the other feast days? Counting the number of days to Passover, I researched the changes in fetal development during that period. I was astounded once again to discover that on the very same day the source I was researching said "on this day the issue is the blood". This is the day that the fetus completes the process resulting in it's own circulatory system. The implications of this are clear. Moving on to Pentecost, I was not surprised to discover that on this day, the developing infant has a fully functional sensory system, sight and hearing. I immediately thought of the first Pentecost when Israel saw the glory of GOD and heard HIS voice from the top of the mountain. I am convinced that Messiah, after HIS conception at the festival of Lights, was faithful even in HIS fetal development to symbolically observe all of the "holy convocations (rehearsals)" commanded in Leviticus, Chapter 23. I just love the wisdom of GOD.

Now, back to why we should know or care about all of this. In Leviticus 23, GOD established the holy convocations based on the Hebrew lunar calendar. HE established the month of Abib as the first month of the year (although HE only used numbers to identify the months). The month of Abib is in the spring and contains the Passover feast. As a consequence, the scriptural feast days and other Jewish holidays are not fixed within our solar-based calendar, but float to different dates from year to year. If you look at your calendar this year you will find that December 25 is not only the traditional Christmas day, but also the first day of Hanukkah or the Festival of Lights. It is also interesting to note that Hebrew tradition teaches that life (or actual birth) begins at conception. So this year, Christians around the world (whether they are aware of it or not), will also be recognizing the true beginning of Messiah's life, and as we have now seen, HIS ministry as a faithful observer of all that the FATHER commanded. Another coincidence? I don't think so. I have no opinion of why GOD is bringing this about at this time in history, but I suspect it is for good reason. So, let us begin on December 25 and celebrate eight days of Christmas this year and give thanks to YHWH GOD for the coming of Messiah.