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Ministries of Great Compassion and Great Commission
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Boatrockers Ministries, Inc.
 Position Paper BR-0030
 Non-Torah Religious Holidays – Christmas

The Genuinely Emotional Question Of Christmas

By David Miller © December 2002, 2006

Note: This paper is a paper in progress. These are only notes for the LARGER article (BR-0030B)

Tracing The Birth Of Messiah – The History Of The Pregnancies

“In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.” - Luke 1:5

*“Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division.”
 - Luke 1:8*

“And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.’ - Luke 1:11-13

“And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home. And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months...” - Luke 1:23-24

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth.” - Luke 1:26

“And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Yahshua.’ - Luke 1:30-31

“And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.” - Luke 1:36

“Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leapt in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” - Luke 1:39-42

Tracing The Birth Of Messiah – The Times

“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it.” - John 1:4-5

“And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” - John 1:14

Tracing The Birth Of Messiah – The Times Of The Priests

“Now the divisions of the descendants of Aaron were these....” - I Chronicles 24:1a

“...the eight for Abijah.” - I Chronicles 24:10b

“These were their offices for their ministry, when they came to the house of the Lord according to the ordinance given to them through Aaron their father, just as the Lord God of Israel had commanded them.” - I Chronicles 24:19

“Now according to the ordinance of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their duties of praise and ministering before the priests according to the daily rule, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at every gate; for David the man of God had so commanded.” - II Chronicles 8:14

“And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, both the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the Lord.” - II Chronicles 31:2

The Evidence Is Presented

In these preceding verse are presented all of the verses in Scripture that are required for any serious student of the Bible to be able to figure out when Messiah was conceived and born. But first a little history so it will all make sense.

Too Many Priests Descended From Aaron

This was the problem that faced King David. There were too many priests who had a right (and an obligation to obey the Commandments) perform the rituals in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. So he divided them up into 24-courses, we even have a secular record by Josephus that this was the case even at the time of Messiah – and up until 70 CE.

“He (King David) divided them also into courses:and he found (or established) of these preists, twenty-four course...and he ordained that one course should minister to God eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath...and this partition hath remained to this day.” Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book VII, Chapter XIV, Section 7

Josephus himself of course was a priest, of the first course or first shift. The Talmud reveals that the first course or shift, began in the first week of the first month of the Hebrew calendar. The Talmud reveals that each course was to work ONE week in rotation throughout the year. PLUS they were ALL required to work three extra weeks during the year:

**Passover,
Pentecost,
Tabernacles.**

We know of course that Nissan is the beginning of months (**Exodus 12:2**). So, Zacharias worked the EIGHT COURSE. 8 times 8 days is 64 days. Since Nissan has the 14th, which is Passover, and the FIRST – First day of the week begins the counting of the Omer (see **Leviticus 23**) 50 Days until PENTECOST.

We can see that Zacharias was working in the Temple during the EIGHTH and NINTH WEEKS of the Hebrew calendar. Depending on what year Yahshua was born in – we can most certainly see as FACT that Zacharias was working during PENTACOST/SHAVUOT during his course. PENTECOST Sometimes occurs in late May, but almost always is in June.

Zacharias Is The Key

ONE Zecharias is working in the Temple During PENTACOST

“In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.” - Luke 1:5

“Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division.”

- **Luke 1:8**

TWO An Angel promises Zecharias that Elizabeth WILL get pregnant

“And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.’ - Luke 1:11-13

THREE Zecharias ends his course lets say in the middle of June. The Scripture SAYS “that after these days (i.e., his returning home) she conceives” – Is God slow in his promises (II Peter 3:9)? No. In fact we KNOW that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit when Gabriel left. So we can also be confident that Elizabeth became pregnant rapidly also.

“And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home. And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months....” - Luke 1:23-24

FOUR If Elizabeth is PREGNANT in June we can simply count.

June to July (1) July to August (2) Aug to Sept (3) Sept to Oct (4) Oct to Nov (5) Nov to Dec (6 months)

FIVE Mary becomes pregnant in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy – IT IS DECEMBER.

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth.” - Luke 1:26

“And the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Yahshua.’ - Luke 1:30-31

“And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.” - Luke 1:36

SIX Mary believes God and she makes haste to see Elizabeth and we see that Mary is ALREADY pregnant.

“Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leapt in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.” - Luke 1:39-42

SEVEN If we simply count again...

**Dec to Jan (1) Jan to Feb (2) Feb to Mar (3) Mar to Apr (4) Apr to May (5) May to Jun (6) Jun to Jul (7)
Jul to Aug (8) Aug to Sept (9)**

What Holy Day Occurs In September and Sometimes October?

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

“And the Word become flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” - John 1:14

Most simple Bibles have the word ‘DWELT’ in place of TABERNACLED – but the right word and the truthful word is TABERNACLED. John is giving us another clue as to His birth. And since Tabernacles is to remind us that God takes care of us and provides for us – what better way to provide than to provide for our SALVATION!

QUESTION: Does it make sense that Herod would tell an entire country to pack up and travel to their cities of origin during the MIDDLE OF WINTER? But for the Feast of Tabernacles, the harvest is done, the people have food and money, and the weather is not too bad in Israel in September. But in December it is SNOWING!

What Non-Leviticus Holy Day Is Celebrated In December?

THE FEAST OF DEDICATION, or HANUKKAH,

What is the miracle that is associated with Hanukkah? The Light burned for 8 days instead of one? The LIGHT of the Temple did not go out. It is interesting that the ancient priests always saw a connection with Hanukkah and Sukkot. Why. Because Messiah is the LIGHT OF THE WORLD and He was conceived in December at the time of Hanukkah and born during Sukkot! Another clue left to us by John:

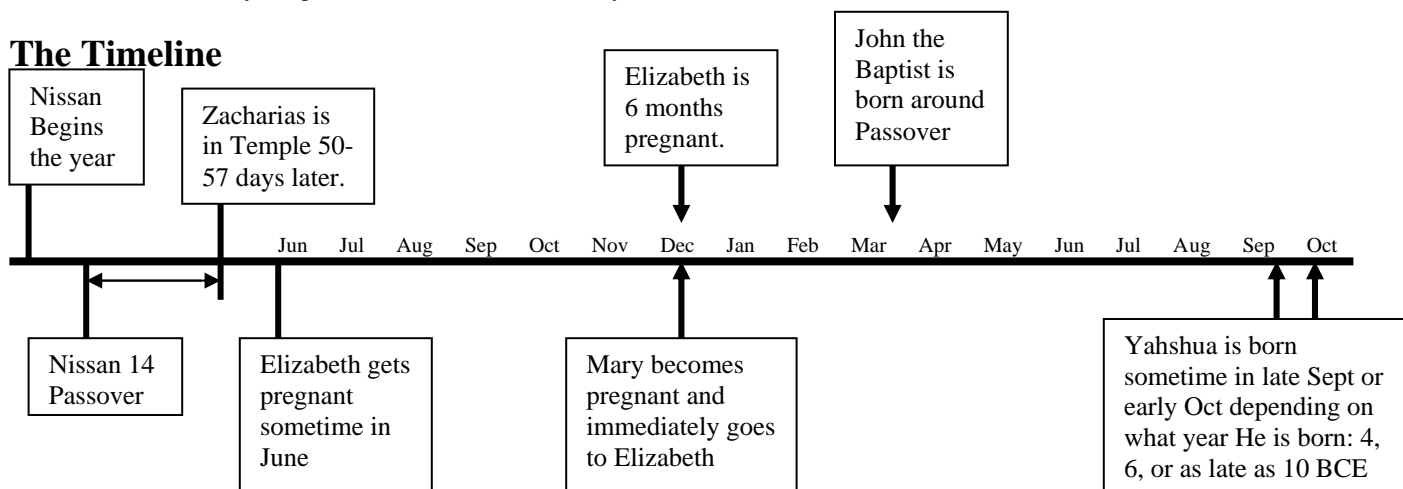
“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it.” - John 1:4-5

How do we know that Hanukkah was in the winter when Yahshua was alive? Look at John 10:22-23. What Holy Day is the Messiah observing and when is He observing it? Hanukkah and it is winter. December. Just as the Temple menorah shone for 8 days because the Temple was the source of God’s light in a dark world. So Messiah shines too in a world of darkness.

The Catholic Church Has A Dilema?

- 1). The Catholic Church venerates December 21st as the day of the Immaculate Conception.
- 2). The Catholic Church venerates December 25th as the Birth of Christ.
 - A). Was Mary pregnant for 4 days?
 - B). Was Mary Pregnant for 12 months and 4 days?

The Timeline



The Evidence Is There ‘If’ We Look For It...

Or, we can simply go with the “traditions of men” and replace the Doctrines of God. But then God has a plan for us to learn about if we follow His Ways – whereas the traditions of men have nothing to teach us when they supplant Gods Word.

“This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrine the precepts of men.” - Matthew 15:8-9 (Isaiah 29:13)

We can celebrate Gods Appointed Days and learn about the real birth of Messiah or we can celebrate the ‘birthday’ of a false sun-god named Mithra, Apollo, Zeus, and Ra – and say it is the birthday of the Only Begotten Son of God. **We know What Jesus Would Do. But What Will You or I Do? (I John 2:6) (Ecclesiastes 12:13)**

Where Did Christmas Come From?

Note: These are direct quotes from the body of research that my wife and I conducted in 1984 – 1985, that convinced us to stop keeping Christmas and return to the faith of my fathers. I figured that I needed to be convinced first by secular sources, since any religious group can claim whatever they want. Then I turned to see what the Bible could prove about the birth of Messiah, His death and resurrection, and about adopting the practices of the pagans. If we look and seek God – He will show us truth.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica Volume 4 Macropadia 1943-1973, 15th edition Christianity Page 499

Christmas, the festival of the birth of Jesus Christ, was established in connection with a fading of the expectation of Christ's imminent return. The Christian festival calendar was thus converted to the Julian solar calendar. The Christmas festival is the Christian revision of the Roman Day of the winter solstice – the festival of DIES invicti Solis (The Day of the Invincible Sun) on December 25.

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The Christians tried to provide counterattractions by placing Christian festivals on the same days of the year as pagan feasts. Solar monotheism was popular in late-3rd century paganism, and soon the Western Churches were keeping the winter solstice (December 25) as Christ's nativity.

Births of deities often were described in miraculous terms. Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of sexual love, is depicted as springing forth from a seashell, a miraculous birth difficult to supercede. MITHRA, the Iranian sun god of light and sacred contracts, is described as being born from a rock, the birth being witnessed by shepherds on a day (December 25) that was later claimed by Christians as the nativity of Christ.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica Volume 7 Macropadia 1943-1973, 15th edition Page 202, Feast and Festival

One of the most well-known festivals of ancient Rome was the Saturnalia, a winter festival celebrated from December 17-24. Because it was time of wild merry-making 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 the contract and the 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.

The Encyclopedia Americana International Edition, volume 6, page 561 Christianity: 1 – Doctrine and Practices

The date, December 25, was that formerly celebrated as the birthday of Mithra, the sun-god, and the feature of friendly gifts reflects other pagan festivals of the winter solstice.

Man, Myth & Magic *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology, Religion, and the Unknown.*, Page 480

Christmas has its origins in two-ancient pagan festivals, the great Yule-feast of the Norsemen and the Roman Saturnalia. Extending from the Advent, which begins on 30 November or the Saturday nearest to it, to Candlemas Day on February 2, it was close enough to the winter solstice to acquire many of the associations of the Norse ceremony: the Yule-log, the evergreen decorations in houses and churches, even the Christmas feast itself. These elements were combined with the Saturnalia of the Romans to provide the basis for the early Christian festival.

During the Saturnalia, gifts were made by the wealthy to the poor in honour of the golden age of liberty when Saturn ruled the known world, and slaves were allowed to change places and clothing with their masters. They even elected their own mock king who, for the period of the festival, ruled as a despot. The Saturnalia involved the wildest debauchery, and was a festival worthy of Pan himself.

Naturally it came under heavy censure from the early church and despite the fact that Jesus Christ and the saints gradually replaced the pagan deities it was long considered completely out of character with the Christian ideal. However, the festival was too strongly entrenched in popular favour to be abolished, and the church finally granted the necessary recognition, believing that if Christmas could not be suppressed it should be preserved in honour of the Christian God.

The Evidence Is All Around You...

All we have to do is search it and look for it. The libraries are full of secular and religious books. And the internet wasn't even around in 1984. But the most important thing is this: will we obey God and worship Him only? Or does this warning apply only to Moses and to the Jews? Does it apply to all of His Redeemed People – both before and after Messiah?

“Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘When you cross-over the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their figured stones, and destroy all their molten images and demolish all their high places.’” - Numbers 33:51-52 (also Exodus 20:2-7).

No where does YHWH EVER say that we are to assimilate false religious practices and doctrines. EVER!