

YESHUA'S BIRTH AND THE FEAST OF SUKKOT

1. According to Luke 1:5, Zechariah the husband of Elizabeth, is a priest and he is listed in the order of Abiyah. (Zechariah's wife Elizabeth is a cousin to Miriam the mother of Yeshua).
2. I Chronicles 24:1-18 In this text King David divides the descendants of Aharon into 24 divisions.
2. I Chronicles 28:11-13 This text tells us the assignment of the priests as given to them by King David.
3. I Chronicles 9:25 According to this verse the priests coming to Jerusalem to serve were to serve one week.
4. II Chronicles 23:8 These verses tell us that the week of service for the priests would start on the Sabbath and end on the Sabbath.
5. Deuteronomy 16:16 There are three feasts (moedim) in which every male is required to appear before the L-rd. These three feasts are Unleavened Bread, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

Summary of what we know

1. Zechariah is a priest in the division of Abiyah.
2. King David divided the priests into 24 divisions.
3. The priests serve as prescribed by King David.
4. The period of service was to be seven days.
5. The start of the service would begin on the Sabbath.
6. Three times a year every male must appear at the Temple.

The Hebrew calendar is a lunar-based month with each month having either 29 or 30 days for a total of 51 weeks in a normal year. A leap month (Adar II) is added every 2nd or 3rd year and it is taken by many that the casting of lots determined the time of ones service. So if we take 24 divisions, plus the three festivals, we have 27 weeks leaving us with another 24 weeks in which case each division would serve a second time. This fact is confirmed by the Mishnah.

We know that the division of Abiyah is the eighth division according to I Chronicles 24. Two of the three pilgrim festivals occur before or during the first eight weeks of the religious year, thus Abiyah would not serve until the 10th week This is the second Sabbath of the month of Sivan (which would start between the 12th and the 18th day).

According to Luke 1:23-24 we know when Yochanan the Immerser was conceived. Verse 23/24 states, "When the time of service was complete, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion". Thus Elizabeth conceives on the third week of Sivan (between the 19th and the 25th). If we assume a standard 40-week pregnancy then Yochanan would have been born on or about the 15th of Nisan ie the time of Passover. Now that we have the time of Yochanan's birth we can calculate the time of Yeshua's birth.

According to Luke 1:26-33 Miriam visits her cousin Elizabeth in the sixth month of her pregnancy. According to this text Miriam becomes pregnant with Yeshua six months after her cousin Elizabeth. If Yochanan is conceived on Sivan 25, then Yeshua is conceived on Chislev 25. The 25th of Chislev is the start of the festival of Hannukah which commemorated the rededication of the Temple following the Maccabean revolt. If we count forty weeks from Chislev 25 we arrive at Tishri 15 which is the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus if our calculations are correct the forerunner of Messiah was born on Passover, Yeshua was conceived on Hannukah and Messiah's birth occurred on Sukkot.