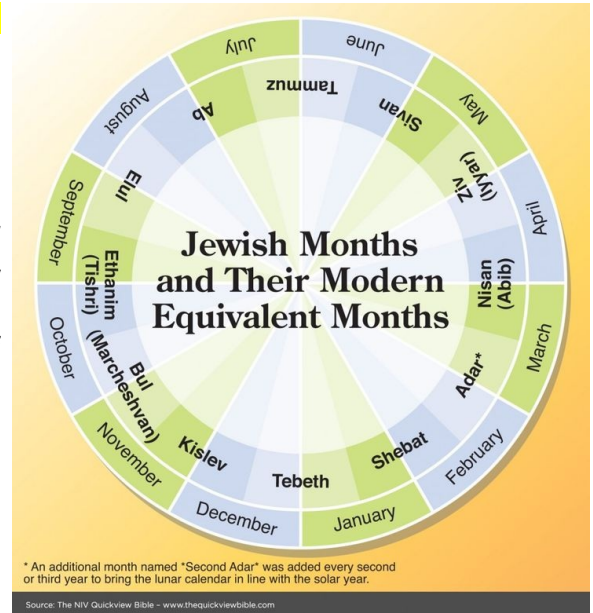

“THE BIRTH OF JESUS ON TISHRI 15: TIMING AND CELEBRATION”

All scriptural evidence and logic confirm the Feast of Tabernacles (September-October) as the time of the birth of Jesus; therefore, The Church of God makes the commemoration of His birth a part of its worship system at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. During the May 11-13, 2021 Council of Apostles and Elders, The Church of God at Jerusalem Acres accepted as church doctrine that **JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN ON TISHRI 15** (which is the start of the annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration).

We know the day that Jesus died: Wednesday, Abib 14, the Day of Passover. We readily admit that was the day some 2,000 years ago that changed our lives and gave us hope of a bright future. However, we must also admit that Passover could never have happened if Jesus had not been born 33½ years earlier on Tishri 15 (the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles).

Most Bible Theologians and Historians agree that Jesus started His ministry when He was 30 years old (Luke 3:23) and ministered for 3½ years making Him 33½ years old when He died on the Cross at Passover on Abib 14 (Mar/Apr). If you count forward 6 months that would give you His birthdate which is Tishri 15 (Sep/Oct).



In **GALATIANS 4:1-5**, the Apostle Paul used the phrase, “*when the fullness of time had come,*” to describe the birth of Jesus. “*Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*” The use of that phrase tells us that Jesus was born at a very specific time. His birth was not random or spur of the moment. It was a defined, well-organized event of monumental proportions.

1. THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE TIMING OF JESUS’ BIRTH IS FOUND IN ISAIAH 9:2-7,

2 “*The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.*”

- » This is in direct correlation with Luke 2:9 when the shepherds beheld an angel and a great light when Jesus was born.
 - **LUKE 2:9**, “*And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.*”
 - **JOHN 1:1-8**, (Amplified Version), “*In the beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. ...4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men. 5 And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it]. 6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came to witness, that he might testify of the Light, that all men might believe in it [adhere to it, trust it, and rely upon it] through him. 8 He was not the Light himself, but came that he might bear witness regarding the Light....*”

3 “You have multiplied the nation and increased its joy; They rejoice before You according to the joy of harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.”

- » **This great light shines when you are rejoicing over the harvest in the Fall.**
 - » Tabernacles is a celebration of the harvest. It occurred on the exact same day of the same month every year. There was no guessing as to when you would celebrate the harvest.
 - **LEVITICUS 23:39a**, “Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month [Tishri15], when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days...”
 - » The celebration/joy of the harvest was at a very specific time of the year. It wasn't random—it was a set time: **TISHRI 15–THE FIRST DAY OF TABERNACLES.**
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4 “For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian.”

- » What is the Prophet Isaiah talking about when he says “You have broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder..”?
 - » Isaiah is saying that mankind's yoke (bondage) to sin has been broken.
 - » When Adam and Eve chose to obey Satan rather than God, they became slaves to sin. This sinful nature was then passed down to their descendants.
 - **PSALM 51:5**, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”
 - **ROMANS 3:23**, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”
 - **ROMANS 6:16**, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?”
 - » That's why we have to be **BORN AGAIN.**
 - **JOHN 3:3,5**, “Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven...5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”
 - » **JESUS BROKE THE YOKE OF SIN OVER OUR LIVES.**
 - **ROMANS 5:12,18-19**,
 - 12 “Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned,”
 - 18 Therefore, as through one man's [Adam] offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's [Jesus] righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.
 - 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.”
 - » We are no longer slaves to sin, now we are slaves to righteousness!
 - **ROMANS 6:18**, “And having been set free from sin, **you became slaves of righteousness.**”
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5 “For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire.”

6 “For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

- » What happens on the 15th day of the 7th month (Tishri 15)?
- » **JESUS IS BORN!**
- » Tishri 15th also is the beginning of the **FEAST OF TABERNACLES.**

7 "Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

2. GOD IS IN THE DETAILS

A. God was very specific as He instructed the Israelites concerning His feast dates in the Old Testament.

- » He was not vague when He defined His feast dates and what He wanted done on those dates.
- » We all know the story of how God used the Roman Government to call for a census (Luke 2:1-3) that required Joseph and Mary to travel to from Nazareth to Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7) so that the prophecies concerning Jesus' birth could be fulfilled (Micah 5:2).

B. Another confirmation of the birth of Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles is found in Luke 1:5.

- » The key statement is the fact that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest of the course of **ABIA**.
- » The course of **ABIA** was the eighth of the 24 priestly courses of ministration in the Temple in Jerusalem (I Chronicles 24:7-19). Each course ministered for one week twice a year, with the first course starting at the beginning of the Jewish civil New Year, Tishri.
- » The reason for the ministration's beginning at the start of the civil year rather than at the first of the religious year (Abib, March-April) is the fact that the delineation of the priestly courses began with Solomon's dedication of the Temple during the Feast of Tabernacles (II Chronicles 7:1,2,8-10).
- » The Jewish month of **TISHRI** corresponds to the last two weeks of September and the first two weeks of October on the Gregorian calendar and is noted as September-October. (See chart at end of this section).

C. The time of Zacharias' first biannual priestly service in the Temple during the 8th course, the course of ABIA, was during the latter part of the month Bul, which corresponds to October/November.

- » The time of his 2nd biannual priestly service was at the end of the month **ZIF**, which corresponds to **APRIL/MAY**.
- » Zacharias was ministering before the Lord during the middle of May when the angel of the Lord appeared to him and declared to him, *"Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John" (LUKE 1:13).*
- » After his priestly service in the temple, Zacharias returned to his home (Luke 1:23). His barren and aged wife Elisabeth conceived miraculously. **Her conception took place in early June,** and she subsequently hid herself for five months.

D. At this time the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, the espoused wife of Joseph.

- » He and announced to her: *"Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren" (LUKE 1:30,31,35,36).*

E. It was during the 6th month of Elisabeth's pregnancy that Mary was overshadowed of the Holy Spirit and conceived Jesus.

- » Since Elisabeth had conceived in early June, her 6th month of pregnancy and the time of Jesus' conception would have been in early December.
- » An average pregnancy/gestation period of forty weeks or two hundred and eighty days would have had **Jesus born in the month of Tishri, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles.**

F. Placing the time of the nativity at the Feast of Tabernacles coordinates with the descriptions of contemporaneous events and circumstances.

- » At the time of Tabernacles, shepherds would still have been abiding in the fields.
- » Since the Feast of Tabernacles was the time of ingathering/harvest, it would have been the most natural time of the year for the Roman government to impose taxation on the people of Israel—because people had money after the sale of their crops!
- » Fall/Autumn would also have been a time when Mary could have undertaken the nearly 100-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

3. EMMANUEL – GOD WITH US!

A. The New Testament explanation of the nature of the Son of God as both God and man that is recorded in John's Gospel lends support to the timing of the nativity at Tabernacles.

- » **JOHN 1:14** declares *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."* A literal translation of this passage is, **"And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us."**

B. It is certainly more than coincidence that it was in the Feast of Tabernacles that the Word of God became flesh and tabernacled with men.

- » Throughout their history the Feast of Tabernacles had been the time when the Jewish people dwelt in booths and searched the skies for the signs of the appearance of the Messiah.

C. The Church of God remembers the birth of Jesus each year on Tishri 15 with various forms of celebration, including special programs and worship services.

- » Many churches conduct a banquet in which members and friends are invited to celebrate the birth of the Lord.

D. A great part of the worship of most of Christianity centers in the celebration of Christmas as the birthday of Jesus.

- » While The Church of God respects those who honor with true reverence and devotion the birth of the Son of God at this time, it does not commemorate the date of the nativity on December 25.
- » The observance of Tishri 15 as the time of the birth of the Lord is a part of The Church of God's effort to restore the worship practices of the church to a more perfect order.

E. Why celebrate on December 25?

- » **FROM THE INTERNET:** *"The origins of Christmas are complex and intertwined with various cultural and religious traditions, including some pagan elements. While Christmas is primarily celebrated as a Christian holiday commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, it coincides with the winter solstice and incorporates elements from pre-Christian traditions."*
- » *The winter solstice (for the northern hemisphere) takes place on 22nd December, the day when the Earth's axis is tilted furthest away from the sun. It is the shortest day of the year and is meant to mark the beginning of winter in the northern hemisphere. But it is also a time of hope because the days begin lengthening again as spring is coming.*
- » *Ancient civilizations around the world thought this was worthy of great celebration. When the early Christians (Catholic Church) linked these winter solstice celebrations with Christmas, it simply made the birth of Jesus that much more auspicious (def. conducive to success, favorable).*