

The Day of Christ's Birth:

Zechariah the father of John the Baptist was of the priestly division of Abijah. (Luke 1:5).

Zechariah was on duty in the Temple when he heard that Elizabeth would become pregnant. (Luke 1:8).

When he came off duty, Elizabeth became pregnant. (Luke 1:23-24).

When Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant, Mary was visited and became pregnant. (Luke 1:26-38).

When was Jesus born? We need to look in the Old Testament (the Tanach) and see when the division of Abijah served in the temple.

The division of Abijah was the eighth lot. (1 Chronicles 24:10). There were 24 divisions of priest and they served for 14 days (except during feasts when all priests served). Starting from Nisan 1 and counting fourteen days for each lot and allowing for the Passover Feast, he would have served from the 18th of Tamuz, until the 2nd of Av, the fourth and fifth Biblical months. All the priests served during the Passover Feast.

If Elizabeth became pregnant when Zechariah came home, she was pregnant in the first part of Av. By a Biblical based Jewish calendar if Elizabeth conceived on the 10th of Av, and six months later Mary conceived, then Mary conceived on Shvat 10th. Counting 40 weeks from Shvat 10th, Jesus was born sometime during the Feast of Tabernacles, Tishrei 15th through Tishrei 21st. The Feasts of Booths or Succot (or Hebrew Cukkah translated as hut, lair, booth cottage, tent). The Greek word "phatne" translated manger can also be translated stall. Jacob built a succot for his animals when he left Padam Aran and crossed back over into Israel. Could the Greek word "phatne" used in this context be referring to the same type of structure used during the feast of Tabernacles (Succot or Cukkah) a temporary booth?

Note: By this counting, John the Baptist was born in the middle of the month of Nisan, approximately during Passover. By Tradition the Passover feast has an empty place setting at the table for Elijah the prophet. By tradition the Jewish people believe Elijah will return on Passover (due to prophecy). John the Baptist is said to be a type of Elijah.

Christmas is an adaptation of the pagan festival celebrating Mithrah (the sun god). It appears to have been incorporated into the Christian religion about the time of Constantine. Constantine was a sun worshipper who had a vision he believed to be Christ. From this vision he was foretold of a great victory in battle. He won the battle and believed the source of his power for the victory came from Christ. It appears that he blended his new found belief in Christ into his pagan beliefs. The Christian Church (Catholic) was formed as the new state religion of the Roman Empire. All loyal Roman subjects were expected to become Christian. It was not mandatory that they forsake their other religions. Many of the customs of the pagan religions were incorporated into Christian festivals to make the transition easier for the new converts. The Roman Empire had a long history of incorporating what they deemed to be the best parts of foreign religions into their religious practices. The Roman religion was a mixture of many other religious beliefs rolled into one religious philosophy.

Does it matter?

The children of Israel incorporated the pagan religion of Egypt into the worship of Yahweh at Mount Sinai when they built the golden calf. They even called it Yahweh as they worshipped it. Jeroboam built two new temples in places not appointed by God, built idols to be worshipped, changed the appointed feast and festival times, and appointed priests of his own choosing when he formed the northern kingdom lest the people return to Jerusalem three times a year at the appointed times and reunite

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with Judah. Over this the whole of the northern tribes were carried into exile, flung across the four corners of the earth.

Is this an absolute proof of when Christ was born? No, because there are approximately 7 leap years in every 19 year cycle. Each leap year has 13 months instead of twelve and the scenario described above does not work out with Christ being born during the Feast of Tabernacles. Either way, leap year or not, Christ would not have been born in December much less December 25th. So where did the practice of celebrating Christmas come from?