



Argument for a Tishri (Sukkot) Birth

There are several reasons to believe that Yeshua was born during the fall, in particular, during the festival of Sukkot (“Tabernacles”). Among the reasons cited are as follows:

1. Yeshua’s cousin, John the Baptist, was conceived in mid Sivan (May/June) and born 40 weeks later on Nisan 15, the Passover, *because*:
 - a. John’s father (Zechariah) was a Levite who was assigned to serve in the Temple during the course of “Aviyah,” the 8th course of the year (Luke 1:5, 1 Chr. 24:10).
 - b. Since the cycle of service began on the first Shabbat of Nisan but both Passover and Shavuot require all priestly courses to serve, the actual time the 8th course would serve would be during the 10th week of the year. This places Zechariah’s service in the Temple as beginning on the second Sabbath of the month of Sivan.
 - c. It is written that John was conceived shortly after this tour of duty (Luke 1:23-4). Therefore, John the Baptist was probably conceived shortly after the third Sabbath of the month of Sivan (i.e., late Sivan).
 - d. Therefore John the Baptist was born around Passover (Nisan 15). (Recall that Yeshua said that John the Baptist was a type of Elijah the prophet (Matt 17:10-13, cp. Luke 1:17). Even today it is customary for Jews to set out a special cup of wine during the Passover Seder meal in anticipation of the arrival of Elijah for the festival.)
2. Yeshua was conceived in late Kislev (Nov/Dec) and born 40 weeks later during Sukkot (“Tabernacles”), *because*:
 - a. Yeshua was conceived six months after John (Luke 1:24-27, 36). Note that the “sixth” month refers to Elizabeth’s pregnancy, *not* the month of Elul (cp. Luke 1:36).
 - b. Six months added to late Sivan is late Kislev, which is the time of the conception of Yeshua (note that the first day of the Jewish festival of Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, is celebrated on the 25th day of Kislev, and Yeshua is called the Light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46)).
 - c. From the 15th day of Nisan (John’s birthday), we add six months to arrive at the 15th day of the 7th month, Tishri - the first day of the festival of Sukkot.

If the day of his birth were the first day of Sukkot, the day of his circumcision would be the eighth day, Shemini Atzeret/Sinchat Torah, which, like the first day, is a day of sacred assembly (Leviticus 23:39). On this day the Jews complete their annual cycle of Torah readings and start again from *Bereshit* (Genesis). Simchat Torah is considered to be a time of “fulfillment” of the Torah. The circumcision of Yeshua at this time indicates how he had come to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matt. 5:17-18).



3. Circumstantial Evidences:

- a. John 1:14 states that the “Word became flesh and “dwelt” with us. The Greek word “dwelt” [*skeinao*] comes from the word *skeinos*, which the LXX (Septuagint) uses for the *mishkan* (tabernacle). The name given for the feast of Tabernacles itself is called *Herotei Skeinon* in the LXX.
- b. King Herod most likely would use the opportunity of the Festival of Sukkot (in Jerusalem) to perform the census (certainly not Chanukah, since he detested and feared the Hasmoneans).
- c. Shepherds would not be out with their sheep in the dead of winter in Israel. The angel who appeared to the shepherds said, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of *great joy* that will be for all the people” (Luke 2:10). Since Sukkot was known as both a festival of joy and also as the “Festival of the Nations,” the angel was actually giving them a greeting for the Festival of Sukkot. This is the only festival where the nations are positively encouraged to participate (Zech. 14:16-19).
- d. After Yeshua returns and sets up His kingdom on earth, it is written that only one festival will be celebrated by the nations: *Sukkot* (Zechariah 14:16) Why is that? Could it be that this will be a worldwide birthday party for Yeshua? (all the other festivals would have been fulfilled - Passover, First Fruits, Pentecost, Rosh Hashanah, and Yom Kippur, but the remembrance of His birth would remain as a celebration).
- e. The Catholic church (in 336 AD) declared December 25th (on the Julian calendar) to be Yeshua’s birthday in order to replace a pagan Roman holiday, Saturnalia. Ironically, December 25th was a celebration of the birthday of the sun god. The early church, in an attempt to get rid of the pagan holiday, declared December 25th to be the birthday of the Son of God.
- f. We know that Yeshua was 30 years old when He started His ministry (Luke 3:23), and, assuming (as many Bible scholars do) that He ministered for 3 1/2 years, we can count backwards from the crucifixion (during Passover in Nisan) 6 months to discover his birthday in Tishri.

Summary: Since Zechariah served during the tenth week and Elizabeth conceived shortly thereafter, we can place the date of Yeshua’s birth during the festival of Sukkot.