

Birth of Yeshua

When should Messianic Believers remember Yeshua's birth?

Almost all authorities are agreed that Yeshua the Messiah was not born on December 25, and that the choice of December 25 for Christmas was an arbitrary date in ancient history, giving former pagans an opportunity to remember something different than what they had previously observed. Today's Messianics, recognizing the questionable origins and traditions associated with Christmas on December 25, will still often recognize that the birth of Yeshua, as principally recorded in Luke ch. 2, is still an event worthy of remembering. But when should it be done? What would be a date or season that is much more appropriate for us considering the entry of the Messiah into the world at Bethlehem?

Many of today's Messianic Believers are of the conviction that Yeshua the Messiah was born in conjunction with the Feast of Tabernacles. This is primarily based on passages such as John 1:14, which speak of how "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (NASU). The Greek verb *skēnoō* (σκηνώω) is employed in this verse, with its noun form *skēnē* (σκηνή) frequently used in the Torah (i.e., Leviticus 23:34, 42-43) to render the Hebrew *sukkah* (סֻכָּה). YLT actually renders John 1:14 with "the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us." It is not at all inappropriate to connect the typology of *Sukkot* to the Incarnation of Yeshua. Yet, just like with those ancient Christian leaders who arbitrarily chose December 25 to remember Yeshua's birth, so might concluding that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Tabernacles also be a bit arbitrary. There is simply no way for us to know for certain.

It is sad, though, that those who are of the opinion that Yeshua might have been born during Tabernacles, have usually been met with varying degrees of resistance when they have tried to integrate this into their *Sukkot* festivities. Attacks along the lines of "We should not be remembering anyone's birth!" are usually issued. The actual, Biblical record of Yeshua's birth can be literally ripped to shreds. A few contentious people who will without hesitation claim that "Christmas is pagan!" now want nothing to do with what the Gospels tell us about the birth of the King of Kings, and prefer to excise it from their Bibles. So to avoid controversy and encourage unity during the *Sukkot* season, those who believe that Yeshua was born during this time often never bring it up, and keep their thoughts to themselves.

Certainly, it is justified to question the spiritual maturity (and even salvation) of those who will not even read passages like Luke ch. 2 or Matthew chs. 1-2 that detail the nativity, and what took place during the early years of Yeshua's life, yet claim Him as their Savior. **Anyone who has placed his or her trust in Yeshua still has to deal with the Biblical text.** Disregarding it completely, as though it does not exist or that it is too "Churchy" for us to consider—even when not celebrating Christmas—is sad evidence of how a few of today's Messianics are utter neophytes when it comes to reading Scriptures about Yeshua's life and ministry.

Not all are convinced that Yeshua was born during the season of *Sukkot*, or are at least skeptical of this proposal and think it needs more research. Yet, it is clear that because the birth of Yeshua is a part not only of Scripture—but also our faith—that we should find a *time* to consider what its message means for us. Aside from celebrating Christmas, or trying to remember the nativity during the Feast of Tabernacles, **it might be that the "safest" time to address the birth of Yeshua is when *Shemot* (Exodus 1:1-6:1) appears in the yearly Torah cycle.** What makes this an appropriate time to consider the message of Yeshua's birth, is that parallels between the birth of Moses and the birth of the Messiah—who came as a "second Moses"—can be considered.

Of course, even if we choose to examine the birth of Yeshua when *Shemot* appears in the Torah cycle, there will still be those few who will oppose it, because they have adopted a very immature and ungodly attitude toward Christmas and their Christian brethren. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can really be done with this kind of people, other than to ask them whether they think the Biblical account of Yeshua's birth should be removed from the Holy Scriptures. And if they actually say yes—then we should wonder whether or not 2 John 7 applies concerning such people:

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“For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Yeshua the Messiah *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antimessiah” (NASU).