

# **Christmas Special 2012-001 and 002: The Birth of the Messiah**

*Psalms 66:18 If I perceive  
sin in my heart, the Lord  
will not hear me.*

*Psalms 32:5 I  
acknowledged my sin unto  
thee, and mine iniquity  
have I not hid. I said, I will  
confess my  
transgressions unto the  
LORD; and thou forgavest  
the iniquity of my sin.  
Selah.*

*1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.*

*1 Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.*

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Gal. 2:21, *“I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”*

Gal. 3:24, *“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith.”*

1 Corinthians 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'*

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

"Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" Acts 16:31

# **Prophecies of the Birth of Christ**

**He would be a descendent of Abraham (*Avraham*).** (Genesis 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; Matthew 1:1-2,17; Galatians 3:8,16)

**He would be from the tribe of Judah (*Yehudah*).** (Genesis 49:8-10; Hebrews 7:14; Revelation 5:5)

**He would be a descendent of David.** (2 Samuel 7:4-5,12-13; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; Psalm 132:11; Luke 1:32-33,67-69; Acts 2:29-30; Matthew 1:17; Romans 1:3)

**He would be born in Bethlehem (*Beit Lechem*).** (Micah 5:2;

Matthew 2:4-6; John 7:42)

**He would be from Nazareth and be called a Nazarene.**

(Matthew 2:23; Luke 1:26-27; John 1:45; Judges 13:5-7,24)

**The exact time of His crucifixion**

**was known** (483 years from the decree to build the temple, which was around 444 B.C.E.).

(Daniel 9:25; Nehemiah 2:1-8; 5:14)

**He would be born of a virgin.**

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:20-23; Galatians 4:4; Genesis 3:15)

**His name would be Immanuel.**

Immanuel in Hebrew means "G-d with us." (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23)

**His name would be Jesus**



**(*Yeshua* in Hebrew), which means "Savior" or "Salvation."** The word *Yeshua* in Hebrew means "salvation." It is derived from another Hebrew word, *Yashah*, which means "to save, deliver, preserve, bring salvation, get victory." (Matthew 1:21)

**His name would be the Messiah.**

The word *Christ* in English comes from the Greek word *Christos*, which means "The Anointed One." *Christos* in Greek is the word *Mashiach* in Hebrew, which also means "The Anointed One." The word *Mashiach* means "Messiah," who is *Yeshua*. (John 1:41)

**He would be the only begotten Son of G-d. (Psalm 2:2,6-7; John 1:14; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:1-2,5)**

**He would be the Son of G-d and G-d would be His Father. (Psalm 89:26-27; 2 Samuel 7:8,12-14; 1 Chronicles 22:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-2,5; Mark 14:36; John 20:30-31)**

**He would be circumcised the eighth day according to the law of purification. (Luke 2:21-24; Leviticus 12:1-6)**

**He would go to Egypt and return to the land of Israel. (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:13-15)**

**Young babies would die in an**

**attempt to kill *Yeshua* at His birth.** (Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16-18)

**He would be preceded by a messenger (a type of Elijah [*Eliyahu*] known as John (*Yochanan*) the Immerser [Baptist]) who would prepare the way of the Lord.** (Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:13,76; Matthew 11:7,10)

# **The Birth of Yeshua During Sukkot**

Author Joseph Good

**An Excerpt From the Book:**

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An easy to document, but not well known fact, is the date of the birth of Yeshua. This is done by establishing several things:

The date that Gabriel the angel tells Zechariah, the soon to be father of Yochanan, about his son's birth. (The birth date of Yochanan (John) is established by going forward nine months,

the term of pregnancy).

The approximate date of Miriam's (Mary's) conception.

The date of Herod's death.

The date that Gabriel the angel told Zechariah that he and his wife were going to have Yochanan is established from the following.

Luke 1.5 states that Zechariah is a priest of the course of Abijah. King David, according to I Chronicles twenty-four, had divided the priestly families into twenty-four groups.

Each group was called a course, and named after the head of that particular family.

Each course served for one week in the first half of the year, and for

another week the second half of the year.

This was in addition to the weeks of Hag haMatzah, Shavuot, and Sukkot, when all the courses were required to be present (Deuteronomy 16.16).

Therefore, the first course served the first week of the year (Aviv); the second course, the second week; then all the courses, the third, because it was Hag haMatzah, and so on.

I Chronicles 24.10 lists the course of Abijah as the eighth course.

This course would serve the tenth week of the first half of the year, having allowed two weeks for Hag haMatzah and Shavuot.

It is at this time that Zechariah receives the prophecy of Yochanan's birth.

*And it came to pass, that, while he executed the priest's office before G-d in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the L-rd. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the L-rd standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zechariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not Zechariah: for thy*

*prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Yochanan.*

*Luke 1.8-13*

Due to the laws of separation (Leviticus 12.5;15.19,25), two additional weeks have to be counted.

Allowing for this and going forward a normal pregnancy, the time of Yochanan's birth (if this is the first half of the year) would be approximately Pesach, when it is expected that Elijah will appear.

Six months following Elizabeth's conception, the angel Gabriel is sent to Miriam (Mary), the cousin of Elizabeth.



*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from G-d unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Miriam (Mary). And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the L-rd is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Miriam (Mary): for thou hast found favour with G-d. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and*

*shalt call His name Yeshua. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord G-d shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.*

*Luke 1.26-33*

Starting at Chanukkah, which begins on Kislev 25 and continues for eight days, and counting through the nine months of Miriam's pregnancy brings one to the approximate time of Sukkot.

The question arises, "How can it be known that Zechariah was given the prophecy about Yochanan in the first half of the

year rather than the last? The key is found in the life and death of King Herod.

Herod, a man hated by the Jewish people, figures prominently into the birth of Yeshua.

In Mattatiyahu (Matthew) two he is visited by “wise men from the East.”

*Now when Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.*

*Mattatiyahu (Matthew) 2.1-2*

From the information in this passage, it can be understood that the “wise men” are Jewish.

While the verse does not tell how many wise men there are, it does give reference to where they were from.

In the Bible, the “land of the East” is always the land of Babylon (see Genesis 29.1; Judges 6.3).

During the first century C.E., the largest Jewish population was in Babylon.

These people were the descendants of the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar.

Even though Ezra, Nehemiah, and others had returned, most of the

people had remained behind.

The fact that the wise men are looking for the Jewish messiah, who was only expected by the Jewish people, should be noted.

A prophecy relating to the Messiah that only the Jewish people were aware of is found in the book of Numbers.

*I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.*

*Numbers 24.17*

Because of the prophecy, a star

was related to the coming of the Messiah.

An example of this is seen when, about one hundred years after the time of Yeshua, Rabbi Akiva mistakenly proclaimed a military leader to be the Messiah.

He was titled “Bar Kochba,” which means “Son of the Star.”

The rabbis or the sages were known as the “chakamim,” which means “the wise men.”

The sage Daniel was referred to by this same title.

A related word, “mag” is also used for “wise men.”

The Greek “magi” is taken from the Babylonian word “mag,” which

has a number of meanings.

It is true that the word does mean “astrologer;” however, this is not its only usage.

The same word is used for scientist, counselor, or scholar.

It is an obvious conclusion, then, that the Jewish sages or wise men from Babylon, knowing the prophecy of Numbers 24.17, relating it correctly to the Messiah, and having seen His star, traveled to Jerusalem to do homage.

Herod was possibly one of the coldest and most bloodthirsty men who ever lived.

He killed his sons, his favorite wife, and thousands of innocent

people.

His fear of losing his throne drove him to insanity.

Augustus Caesar, having noted that Herod observed Jewish Law and therefore would not eat pork, once made the statement that it was better to be a pig in the house of Herod than to be one of his sons.

It is no surprise that Herod sought the child's life, nor that all of Jerusalem would be troubled as Herod received this news.

*When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*

*Mattatiyahu (Matthew) 2.3*



Traditional teaching is that the “wise men” appeared about a year to eighteen months after the birth of Yeshua.

This has been based upon Herod’s killing of the male children under two years, according to the date that the wise men had given him for the appearance of the star.

*Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. Then Herod, when he saw that he*

*was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.*

*Mattatياهو (Matthew) 2.7-8, 16*

It was the custom in ancient Israel to count the years of one's age from the date of conception; therefore, Herod actually killed the children one year old and under according to the way that age is calculated today.

In fact, the wise men arrive in Jerusalem either just prior to or at the time of Yeshua's birth.

It is important to note that up to this time, no one in Jerusalem, including the Temple priest, had heard that Yeshua had been born. Knowing the nature of Herod, and his practice of having spies throughout the countryside, it is impossible that he would not have heard of his birth.

Luke's account of the birth relates the experience of the shepherds of Bethlehem, who after seeing the newborn Yeshua, broadcast what they have seen and heard to the entire region.

*And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.*

## *Luke 2.17*

Realizing that Bethlehem is within five miles of Jerusalem makes it very improbable that Herod or the Temple priest would be ignorant of His birth. Further proof is seen in that forty days after the birth of Yeshua, Miriam (Mary) carries Yeshua to the Temple for her purification and His dedication.

It is here that two well known individuals within the Temple compound and make known prophesy concerning the child.

*And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the L-rd; (As it is*

*written in the law of the L-rd, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the L-rd;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the L-rd, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Ruach haKodesh (the Holy Spirit) was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Ruach haKodesh, that he should not see death, before he had seen the L-rd's Messiah. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child*

*Yeshua, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed G-d, and said, L-rd, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Miriam his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword*

*shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher: she was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served G-d with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the L-rd, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

*Luke 2.22-38*

Having realized that it is

impossible for the wise men to arrive after these events, it can be assumed that they must have spoken to Herod about the time of His birth.

Traveling on to Bethlehem, they found the child and His parents in a house, (Mattatityahu 2.11); whereas, in the Luke account the shepherds found Him in a stable (Luke 2.7,16). There is no discrepancy between these two accounts, for likely the new mother and child were moved from the stable following the birth.

The fact that He was born in a stable is a clue to the time of His birth, for in Hebrew a stable is called a “sukkah” (Genesis 33.17).



“Sukkot,” the name of the festival, is the plural form of this word.

It is even significant that they had to seek cover in the “sukkah” due to “no room in the inn” (Luke 2.7). It was only during the three pilgrim festivals (Pesach, Hag haMatzah, and Shavuot) that Bethlehem would overflow with people.

The thousands of pilgrims coming to Jerusalem for the festivals would spill over to the surrounding towns.

In ancient times, reporting for a census would be done over a several month period due to the difficulties of travel, as well as the economics of an agricultural society.

It is highly improbable that so many people would be in Bethlehem for Caesar's census all at one time.

As stated above, Joseph and Miriam (Mary) bring the child into Jerusalem forty days after Yeshua's birth.

This indicates that Herod died within this same forty days. The chronology of these forty days is imperative in correctly finding His birth date.

The probable scenario is this: Joseph and Miriam (Mary) come to Jerusalem for the festival of Sukkot (September or October), planning to stay in the nearby Bethlehem in order to register for

the census.

Unable to find a room at the inn, they are given shelter in a stable, which just happens to be a Sukkah.

During the night the wise men arrive in Jerusalem and speak to Herod.

Meanwhile, Miriam gives birth. The heavenly host appear to the shepherds, proclaiming that the Messiah has been born.

They go to pay Him homage in the stable, while the wise men are making their way to Bethlehem. The shepherds leave to “noise it abroad,” and Miriam is moved to a house.

The wise men arrive and during the night are warned by G-d concerning Herod.

Joseph and Miriam take the child and flee to Egypt and remain there until they are told by G-d that Herod is dead.

On returning to Judea, they dedicate Yeshua according to the Law, receiving the prophecies of Anna and Simeon.

After this, they turn aside into Galilee, where they will live.

It is apparent that as long as Herod was alive, they could not appear at the Temple.

Therefore, if the approximate date of Herod's death could be

determined, it would establish the season of Yeshua's birth.

The Jewish historian, Josephus, who lived during the first century C.E., documents in detail Herod's death.

Josephus relates that Herod became very ill immediately following an act of impiety against the priesthood, at which time an eclipse of the moon occurred.

This eclipse, the only one mentioned by Josephus, happened March 13 in the year of the Julian period 4710, and the fourth year before the Common Era.

Herod's illness lasted several months and is documented in great detail as being painful and distressful.

Many times cures were sought and brought about temporary relief; however, nothing prevented imminent death.

According to Josephus' calculations, Herod's death occurred about September, in the fourth year before the Common Era.

Therefore, with the knowledge that Herod died in autumn, the same time of year as Sukkot, and that his death was within forty days of the birth of Yeshua, it is [likely]

established that Yeshua was born  
at this time of year.

# **Christmas Special 2012-001 and 002: The Birth of the Messiah – a Messianic Jewish Perspective from Beth Shechinah**

## **Part 2 — When was the Messiah born?**

Did you know there is not a single reference found anywhere in the New Covenant that the early Believers or leaders instituted a holiday to celebrate Yeshua's birth.

How do we explain this?

For some reason the writers of



the New Covenant chose not to record the time of this very important event.

It is important to understand something about Jewish tradition. The Hebraic custom is to emphasize the death of a person, more than one's birth.

This tradition carries forward even today in the practice of "Yahrzeit", a commemoration of the anniversary of a Jewish person's death.

This tradition has some scriptural support, for we see an abundance of passages outlining the events leading up the death of the Messiah.

We have no direct

documentation of the precise birth date of Yeshua because He lived in a Jewish culture that commemorated and honored death instead of birth and the authors of the Gospels reflected this in their writings.

The idea of a birthday is a man made tradition that has no roots in the Bible. This is not to say that the custom of celebrating one's birthday is wrong, it just wasn't the practice during the first century.

There is abundance of scripture in the gospels that describe the events leading up to the Messiah's birth and the circumstance surrounding it, but

nothing as to when He was born. Having said this, is there any evidence in scripture to indicate when the Messiah was born?

Let me suggest evidence to support that Yeshua was born during the Feast of Sukkoth (Tabernacles).

Yeshua's ministry centered around the Feasts of Israel. All seven Appointed Feasts found in Leviticus 23 were intended to be a foreshadowing of the Messiah. I

t was during the Feast of Passover that Yeshua offered Himself as the Passover Lamb. It was on the Feast of First Fruits that He rose from the dead.

Fifty days later on the day of Shavuot (Pentecost), He sent the Holy Spirit to fill and empower His followers.

Rosh Hashanah (the Feast of Trumpets) we believe corresponds to the time of the Messiah's Second Coming, when we will hear the sound of the great Shofar 1 Thess. 4:16.

He is both the Atonement for man's sin and the High Priest of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

The Feast of Sukkoth, the seventh and final feast is a picture of God dwelling, (tabernacling among His people).

In Isaiah 7:14, God said that He would give a sign to recognize

how the Messiah would be born. "The Lord Himself will give you a sign; the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and He shall be called Emmanuel (God with us)."

It was during the Feast of Tabernacles that the Jews were commanded to come to Jerusalem to celebrate this annual Feast.

That would explain why Miriam and Joseph could find no place to lodge in Bethlehem.

Also a December birth is not a favorable time for the shepherds to be tending their flocks in the night.

This time of the year is the winter

rainy season and can be very cold.

Another clue regarding the timing of the Messiah's birth is found in the gospel of Luke chapter 1.

He describes in this first chapter how the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias while he was conducting his priestly service in the temple.

Zacharias was part of the division of Abijah, a group of priests who served one week in the month of Tammus (mid- June) and another week in Kislev (early December).

**The Chronology from Luke 1**  
Mid June - During Zacharias  
term of service, the angel

Gabriel announces that Zacharias and Elizabeth will have a son. vs. 8-13

Early to mid July - Elizabeth becomes pregnant vs. 23-24

Late December - In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, Gabriel appears to Miriam to announce that she would be conceived by the Holy Spirit and give birth to the Messiah.

Late December - Miriam conceives the Messiah, possibly during the Feast of Hanukkah. There are exactly nine months between Hanukkah and the Feast of Sukkot.

Early January - Miriam visits Elizabeth who is six months pregnant. Vs. 39-45 Miriam stays for a three-month visit and returns home in early April.

Early to Mid April - Elizabeth gives birth to Yochanon.

Late September - early October -  
The time of Sukkot -  
Tabernacles.

Miriam gives birth to Yeshua  
Luke 2:1-7

Another clue is in Luke 2:10.

The Feast of Sukkot is known as the "Season of Joy" and the "The Feast of the nations".

With this in mind Luke 2:1 says,  
"And the angel said unto them,



"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings" (Basar in Hebrew means gospel of great joy).

Sukkot is called the "Season of our Joy which shall be to all peoples."

Sukkot is also known as the Feast of the Nations because in Zech. 14 it says that during the Millennial kingdom, the nations will be commanded to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Sukkot.

We can deduce from the gospel accounts that the birth of Yeshua was announced with themes and messages associated with the Feast of Tabernacles.

In Luke 2:12 it says that Yeshua

was wrapped in swaddling cloths. These swaddling cloths were often worn out priestly garments which would have deep significant that Yeshua as Israel's High Priest would be wrapped in priestly garments.

Swaddling cloths were also used as wicks to light vats of oil within the court of the women during the Feast of Sukkot and so they were associated with the Festival of Sukkot.

In John 1:1,14 is another clue: "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God ... "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory..."

This is a powerful testimony of Yeshua being the living Torah that became flesh and dwelt among men.

The word dwelt in Hebrew comes from the root word Sukkah, which is the temporary shelter built during this feast to commemorate Israel's wilderness wanderings.

Again we see a Sukkot theme associated with the Messiah's birth. Hebrews 7: 17 - Another reason that I would suggest as to why God chose not to record the day of the Messiah's birth is found in the book of Hebrews. Hebrews identifies "Yeshua as a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

Who was Melchizedek? He was a mysterious figure who first appeared to Abraham.

See Genesis 14:18-20.

This King of Salem brought to Abraham bread and wine and blessed him and Abraham tithed him a tenth of all.

In Hebrews 7:1-3 it says Melchizedek was called a priest of the most High, King of Righteousness and King of Peace. "He was without Father, mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually."

Melchizedek had no Father or

Mother, no record of beginning or end of days nor end of life.

He offers an impressive type of Messiah.

There is a Messianic prophecy of the Messiah's birth in Micah

5:2 "But you Bethlehem

Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah,

yet out of you will come for me

one who will be ruler over Israel

whose goings forth have been

from of old from EVERLASTING

TO THE DAYS OF ETERNITY!"

One Rabbinical source from the

Targum (An ancient Jewish

writing) translates this verse as:

"And you, O Bethlehem

Ephrathah, you who were too

small to be numbered among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you shall come forth before me the Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel, He whose name was mentioned before, from the days of creation."

We read in this prophecy that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.

Yet Micah said that the Messiah existed before the creation of the world.

God's word speaks of the Messiah as pre-existent, one who existed before the world was.

The pre-existent Messiah was not a created being, or one who was

born. He is God who came in the flesh to dwell among men.

Why is it so difficult to understand that the creator of the universe, who spoke the universe and the worlds into being could not create life in the womb of a virgin?

Is anything too difficult for God? Like Melchizedek, the Messiah had no beginning or end of days because He is the Pre-existent and eternal Messiah who is from everlasting.

We worship a Messiah who has no beginning or end of days.

We should rejoice in the Messiah's birth 365 days of the year.

## **Part 3 — Church History**

How then did December 25th come to be recognized as the birth of the Messiah?

The fact that the time of his birth is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible, and it was not until the 3rd - 4th century that it became recognized as an official holiday, proves that it was man-made.

It was Constantine who instituted Christianity as an official religion of the Roman Empire.

He was responsible for allowing many traditions and customs that were not rooted in the scriptures to be incorporated within the Christian faith, at the same time distancing the Church from the



Jewish roots of their faith.

In fact in the fourth century, he mandated acceptance of the following profession:

"I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads and feasts of lambs of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspersions, purification's sanctification's and propitiation's, and feasts, and new moons, and Sabbaths and superstitions and hymns and chants and observances and synagogues and the food and drink of the Hebrews; in one word, I renounce absolutely everything Jewish, every law rite and custom..."

Down through the centuries there has been a steady decline and separation from the Jewish roots of our faith.

To it's great ruin, the Church has lost sight of the rich heritage and Biblical customs in Jewish history which are linked with the message of the Bible.

We hear many people say, what difference does it make when Yeshua was born.

The most important thing is that He was born.

No one would argue that point. Without His birth, there would be no hope or salvation for mankind. It is not the birth of the Messiah that is the issue.

It is how the Christian community has allowed many customs and traditions to be associated with His birth that have no basis in the word of God.

The Church has chosen to replace holy roots with unholy ones.

Many of the customs and traditions of Christmas are Babylonian in origin and are rooted to pagan practices and idolatry.

To name a few: the word Christ MAS, the Christmas tree, the mistletoe, the Yule log are all Babylonian in origin.

It is widely accepted by scholars that almost all the ancient

religions and occult forms of worship are rooted in ancient Babylon.

Even the day chosen, Dec. 25th is Babylonian in origin. Dec. 24th and 25th were originally the celebration of an astronomical event called the Winter Solstice.

The Babylonians celebrated in those days the completion of the sun's yearly course and the commencement of a new cycle. It was known as the birthday of the sun, (the wrong one).

It was a day set aside to honor the birth of one of her own sun gods, the son of the Babylonian queen of heaven, called Gad.

In Rome, this feast was called the

Feast of Saturn.

It lasted five days and was characterized by drunkenness and was called the "Drunken Festival of Babylon".

Many of the modern day observances of the Christmas season originated from this winter Festival.

Trees and evergreens were decorations used as symbols of eternal life and objects of worship. The tree symbolized Nimrod, the slain god come to life.

The fact that the tree was an evergreen symbolized the perpetuity and everlasting nature of the power of this god.

The pagans lighted candles on the

eve of the festival.

Even the practice of exchanging gifts and cards stems from the ancient Roman custom called "Strenae".

During this winter festival, the people would give "good luck" gifts of fruit, pastry or gold to their friends.

The Yule log burning in the fire symbolized Nimrod cut down by his enemies and the evergreen tree symbolized Nimrod coming back to life.

A closer look into the details of these traditions can be found in the book "The Two Babylon's"

## **Part 4 — A Messianic Perspective**

I share these things simply to help us understand where the roots of these traditions originated so that their roots may be exposed for what they really are.

Christmas as it is celebrated by the world today has little to do with the birth of the Messiah.

The god that is worshipped is not Yeshua, the Savior of the world but the god of materialism root in Babylonian worship.

It has become the most profitable time of the year for most businesses!

If you take Santa Claus, the

Christmas tree, the gifts, decorations and all the festivities out of this day and recognize it only as the celebration of the birth of the Messiah, do you think that the world would celebrate it? I very much doubt it.

The world celebrates Christmas as a Winter Festival, even expressing animosity to the Church for trying to emphasize the Spiritual meaning of this celebration as the birth of the Messiah.

In fact the world is trying everything it can, to remove the religious context associated with this feast.

How paradoxical!



This is yet another proof that the roots of this day were never Biblical because people of the world who have no relationship with God or His Son are celebrating it.

The Christian community has failed to maintain a purity, holiness and integrity to the Messiah's birth.

They have chosen to celebrate the most important event in world history; the birth of the Messiah and Savior of the world on a day that is Babylonian in origin.

The Christian community have compromised and allowed the culture and values of the world to influence their observance of this

day.

The festival of Hanukkah instituted by the Jews in 165 BC and celebrated today, has come to epitomize the struggle of Israel as a nation striving to walk in holiness and survive in the midst of an unholy, godless and hostile world. The whole purpose why this day became instituted as a holiday was because the Jews refused to allow the Syrian-Greeks to impose their Greek culture upon them. They fought to their death in order to keep their faith and culture holy and pure.

Unfortunately, the many in the Church have compromised their convictions and have chosen to

not distance themselves from customs and traditions of the world that have no basis or roots in the word of God.

How then should we respond to these traditions that have become so widely celebrated throughout the world during this time of the year?

It is important that we develop a biblical basis for the traditions that we observe to ensure that they are rooted in God's word.

## **Part 5 — Developing A Biblical View of Tradition**

Tradition in and of itself is not wrong, as long as it does not

violate or compromise the scriptures.

Yeshua never spoke against tradition, only when they transgressed the commandments of God because of their traditions.

**There are basically three ways that people view tradition:**

**1. The strong Traditionalist -** those who live for tradition.

They tend to be very conservative and legalistic.

They are very religious and have strong views and opinions on issues to the point of unbending.

We have all met those kind of people.

If it was good enough for my mother and father and grandparents, it is good enough for my children too. They don't question why they believe what they do.

They have such a strong view of tradition, that when challenged, can become very emotional, angry and even hostile.

**2. The Anti-traditionalist** - those who are opposed to any kind of form of tradition.

They are almost proud of the fact that they walk in liberty and freedom.

I am not bound to anything.

They equate tradition and even the law with bondage.

As soon as they hear the word tradition or law, the lights start flashing, walls and barriers go up.

I don't want any part of that "tradition".

God has set us free from the law and we are no longer under it. It has been abolished. This is an unbalanced and extreme view of grace and law.

**3. The Moderate traditionalist**  
- one who is not extreme one way or the other.

He holds moderate opinions on tradition.

He may hold to and observe some traditions and forms but he is not bound to them.

He sees value in tradition but is willing to be flexible and open minded, yet not legalistic.

There is a freedom yet an honoring of that which is good. This is a more balanced view of tradition.

All people hold to some form of tradition in their lives, whether it is spiritual or cultural.

Every society has a unique culture that expresses certain customs, values and traditions.

They can provide a sense of identity by providing security and structure in their lives.

Can you imagine what it would be like to have constant change in your life?

We are all habitual in nature.

Man by nature does not like a lot of change.

Traditions can become either a blessing that draws us closer to God or a bondage that leads us away from God.

Let me share with you five guidelines that will help you to discern whether certain religious traditions are biblical and can be embraced, or worldly and should be avoided.

- 1. Are the Roots of That Tradition Holy or Unholy?**  
The Olive tree is a symbol in



the Bible of Israel. In Messiah, Gentiles are grafted into the Olive tree. The Jews are called the "natural branches and the non-Jews, the "wild branches".

Romans 11:16-18 says, "if the roots are holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you (gentiles), being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among the, (Jews) and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the Olive tree do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that

you do not support the root,  
but the root supports you."

A Messianic leader was once  
quoted as saying that "much  
of the 'Church' is like a  
Christmas tree - all glitz and  
ornaments, frills and lights -  
but cut off from it's roots.  
It should be like the Olive tree  
- deeply rooted in the Holy  
Scriptures, the root being  
Messiah himself."

There is much truth to this  
statement.

When we develop traditions to  
express our faith, are they  
rooted in the holy root of  
God's word?

**Ultimately, the bottom line is  
what the scriptures say:**

2 Corinthians 6:17 - "We are a holy people, set apart by God. God has called us to come out from among them and be separate. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you."

Deut. 12:1-4 - "These are the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you to possess all the days that you live on the earth. You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations, which you shall

dispossess, serve their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars and burn their wooden images with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place. You shall not worship the Lord your God with such things.

Jeremiah 10:1-7 - "Do not learn the ways of the Gentiles (the nations)...for the customs of the peoples are futile (worthless) ... "For one cuts a tree from the forest, the work

of the hands of the workman, with the axe, they decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple." (Sounds like a Christmas tree doesn't it?) Though this is not what is referred to here, the truth and principle is consistent with the word of God.

Anything fashioned that is idolatrous in form, is contrary to God's word and violates the second commandment. "You shall not make for yourself any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the

earth beneath...

As a Messianic congregation,  
our purpose is to ensure that  
the foundations and roots of  
our faith are holy.

**2. Does the Tradition Point to the Messiah?** He should be the center and focus of our tradition.

All the Feasts of Israel that are observed in a Messianic Congregation throughout the year are observed within the context of recognizing that Yeshua is the Messiah and the central figure that we worship. Most of the traditions that are associated with Christmas certainly do not point to the

Messiah.

In fact they distract and draw one away from Him.

**2. Does the Tradition or Custom Glorify and Honor God?** This is our greatest calling and purpose as God's people.

To honor and glorify God in our lives. "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

In Matthew 23:1-6, Yeshua was not opposed to tradition, only the hypocrisy in men's hearts who observed them as an outward show, to be seen by men.

There are many traditions and customs within the Jewish faith that are beautiful that can glorify and honor God.

The Friday night Sabbath meal that Jewish families come together and celebrate each week includes such traditions as (the Sabbath candles, Kiddush cup and Challah, praying a blessing over the family and children).

We meet on the Sabbath to read from the Torah to honor and celebrate God's word, wearing prayer shawls the kippot



(skullcaps).

In each of these practices, God is the focus and center of our tradition.

As a Messianic Congregation, we seek to honor and glorify God through these visible expressions and traditions because we seek to keep the Messiah at the heart and center of our faith.

There is a freedom of worship through the Holy Spirit that one can experience without allowing these traditions to lead us into bondage or legalism.

#### **4. Does it Draw us Closer to**

**God?** Do we experience God's presence as we celebrate this tradition, or do we find that it distracts us from drawing into God's presence? In Matthew 15:1-9, we read how Yeshua challenged the scribes and Pharisees view of tradition.

"Why do you transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" vs. 3  
"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Vs. 8

**5. Are these traditions characteristic of the world or of God?** The apostle Paul said in Colossians 2:6-9 "As you have therefore received Messiah Yeshua the Lord, so walk in Him. ROOTED and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught. Beware lest anyone deceive you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the TRADITION of MEN, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Messiah. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form...for you are complete in

Him."

## **LIBERTY VS. LEGALISM**

A third truth that is important to understand is the issue of liberty vs. legalism. Some people can feel threatened and become emotional, angry or even hostile when their traditions are challenged.

Even if you can prove to them from the scriptures it is wrong, many people still resist change.

A person will always find a way to justify his or her actions.

How can we deal with the strong traditionalists or those who may oppose what we believe?

## **How to Walk In Liberty Without**

## **Being Legalistic:**

I have found a good rule to go by in dealing with these types of people and issues, is a principle found in Romans 14:1-5 and 10-13. Vs. 19-22

*"Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace to mutual upbuilding (edification). Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food in this case for the sake of TRADITION. Whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he*

*approves."*

It is not our place to judge or condemn anyone for what their particular conviction may be (even if they are wrong).

This subject is not an issue of salvation or doctrine.

It becomes a matter of conscience and falls under the same category of those Believers in Paul's day, who ate food sacrificed to idols.

I Corinthians 8:9

*"But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours becomes a stumbling block (or cause of offense) to those who are weak"*

Remember, we are bridge

builders not bridge burners.  
If we burn our bridges behind us,  
we damage our witness. Part of  
our vision as a Messianic  
Congregation is to build bridges  
in the Christian and Jewish  
community.

We can alienate ourselves from  
our brethren by coming across  
with a judgmental and legalistic  
attitude.

As a Messianic congregation we  
are trying to repair, rebuild and  
restore truths back into the  
Christian community.

Our vision is to help the body  
return to the foundations and  
roots of their faith so that we can  
see spiritual renewal and revival

come to the body.

Let us not destroy the work of God for the sake of tradition, to just try and prove that we are right.

We need to guard our hearts against becoming self-righteous like many of the Pharisees, in Yeshua's day.

*"Knowledge puffs up but it is love that builds up. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual up-building...Let us not judge one another anymore but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brothers way." Romans 14:13*