

The festivals or feasts all point to the life of Yeshua.

Sukkot - His birth and circumcision (covenant per Genesis 17:10-14)

Pesach - His death

Bikkurim - His resurrection

Shavuot - spread His story (gospel) by the Holy Spirit through giving fluency of languages (reversing Babel)

Yom Teruah - announce the Day of the Lord - His return

Yom Kippur - His judgment

Sukkot - being with Him forever

The celebration of Sukkot (booths) began as the fall harvest, enjoying the results of labor, and God's presence - without the constant demands of normal work.

Exodus 23:16

Also you are to observe ... the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather your crops from the field.

Leviticus 23:33-36

YHVH spoke to Moses saying: "Speak to sons of Israel, and say, On the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the Feast of Sukkot, for seven days to YHVH. On the first day there is to be a holy convocation - you are to do no laborious work. For seven days you are to bring an offering by fire to YHVH. The eighth day will be a holy convocation to you, and you are to bring an offering by fire to YHVH. It is a solemn assembly - you should do no laborious work."

Leviticus 23:39-43

"So on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruits of the land, you are to keep the Feast of YHVH for seven days. The first day is to be a Shabbat rest, and the eighth day will also be a Shabbat rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit of trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and rejoice before YHVH your God for seven days. You are to celebrate it as a festival to YHVH for seven days in the year. It is a statute forever throughout your generations - you are to celebrate it in the seventh month. You are to live in sukkot for seven days. All the native-born in Israel are to live in sukkot, so that your generations may know that I had sons of Israel to dwell in sukkot when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am YHVH your God."

Deuteronomy 16:13-15

"You are to keep the Feast of Sukkot for seven days, after gathering in the produce from your threshing floor and winepress." So you will rejoice in your feast - you, your son and daughter, slave and maid, Levite and outsider, orphan and widow within your gates. Seven days you will feast to YHVH your God in the place He chooses, because YHVH your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hand, and you will be completely filled with joy.

So we celebrate by making temporary structures - booths (not tents) - in honor of the forty years that YHVH sustained the Israelites completely, and how He continues caring for us, as we obey Him and walk in the path He gives us.

We reviewed earlier that Sukkot is when Yeshua was born There is more to that.

When Was Yeshua Born?, Q&C, BAR, July/August 2013, John A. Cramer, Professor of Physics, Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia

The birth of Yeshua is often dated to 4 BC, based on the fact that both Luke and Matthew associate Yeshua's birth with Herod's reign. There is reason to reconsider this as the date of Herod's death. This date is based on Josephus's remark in Antiquities 17.6.4 that there was a lunar eclipse shortly before Herod died. This is traditionally ascribed to the eclipse of March 13, 4 BC. Unfortunately, this eclipse was visible only very late that night in Judea and was additionally a minor and only partial eclipse. There were no lunar eclipses visible in Judea thereafter until two occurred in the year 1 BC. Of these two, the one on December 29, just two days before the change of eras, gets my vote since it was the one most likely to be seen and remembered. That then dates the death of Herod the Great into the first year of the current era, four years after the usual date.

Why did it happen during the Roman empire? Because Pax Romana was a time of relative peace in all western civilization, from 27 BC through 180 AD. The Romans built amazing roads, and had peacekeeping forces along those roads, so travel of great distances was possible with a sense of safety. Thus news could travel far and fast!

What about the Roman census? How did that determine the time of year for the birth of Yeshua? The Romans knew the Jews came together three times each year, so they took advantage of that. They were not in a big hurry like we are today, so they could wait a year or two for results.

What about the stable? A sukkah is similar to a stable, so this is not an issue - yes, animals could have been in the area.

Luke 2:1-4

Now it happened in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the world's inhabitants. This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone was traveling to be registered in his own city. Now Joseph also went up from the Galilee, out of the town of Natzeret to Judah, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family of David.

Luke 2:6

But while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

music video: *O Holy Night*

Luke 2:21

When eight days had passed for His brit-milah, He was named Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. [Also the eighth day of Sukkot.]

Wise men? The Magi represent non-Jews who looked forward to the Messiah. Two years after the birth - the family was in a home, not in a sukkah.

Matthew 2:1-5

Now after Yeshua was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the One who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When King Herod heard, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had called together all the ruling kohanim and Torah scholars, he began to inquire of them where the Messiah was to be born. So they told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet Micah."

Matthew 2:7-10

Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the Child. And when you have found Him, bring word back to me so that I may come and worship Him as well." After listening to the king, they went their way. And behold, the star they had seen in the east went on before them, until it came to rest over the place where the Child was. **When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.**

music video: *Rejoice With Exceeding Great Joy*

Matthew 2:12-13

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another way. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of YHVH appears to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the Child, to kill Him."

Matthew 2:16

Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became furious. And he sent and killed all boys in Bethlehem and in all its surrounding area, from two years old and under, according to the time he had determined from the magi.

Matthew 2:19-20

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of YHVH appears in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and go to the land of Israel, for those seeking the Child's life are dead."

What about Christmas today? Part of it is a genuine celebration of Yeshua's birth, but at the wrong time. Historically winter is a time of shutting down, of living off what we have stored up until spring. About 87% of the world's population lives in

the Northern Hemisphere, so the majority of people see Christmas in winter. Most of that is related to winter solstice, which begins December 21 or 22 - the shortest day. The days after that are longer, so they become a celebration that winter is slowly going away. here are many other traditions, but not related to Yeshua. God's festivals occur at equinox - spring or fall - meaning equal night. Thus the seasons of these are similar in both Northern and Southern Hemispheres. The celebration of Yeshua's birth is thus in relatively good weather, no matter which hemisphere you live in.

The more important item is WHY Yeshua was born as a human. God promised a deliverer in Genesis 3, and many more times in the rest of the Tanach. He promised He would be with us - God with us - Immanu-El. He was with us in the exodus from Egypt to Canaan, as the pillar of cloud and fire. He sent temporary deliverers by sending "judges" to help pull us back toward Him. He can't just dwell with us if we are not able to be in His presence - our sin must be "covered" (by sacrifice) so we can get near to Him. We need a substitute. The animal sacrifices of the Torah only temporarily covered our sin at that time. Yeshua had to come as one of us, to substitute for the death of each of us because of our sin. He was the ultimate sacrifice, to confirm all these previous sacrifices. Go to Isaiah 53 - the servant who pays for our sins is a human, not an animal! The substitute must be normal human, just like us. Not an angel, not another animal - a human, born of a woman, growing through childhood just like us, becoming an adult just like us, having the same temptations that we have, subject to physical problems just like us. Only a sinless man could pay that penalty (representing both sexes because a man has X and Y chromosomes).

Hebrews 9:12

Messiah entered the most holy place once for all time, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

But wait - He is the son of God! Yes, but He denied Himself so that He could become our sacrifice.

Philipians 2:5-8

Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped. But He emptied Himself - taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself - becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Creator of the universe, the Word of God, gave up all that power and glory to become just like us, to die for us.

music video: *I Wonder As I Wander*

Now we have the privilege of looking back to His incarnation and enjoying His present help for us (through the Spirit).

music video: *ImmanuEl*

We have dark days ahead - we see some of prophesied evil happening now. After the final wars, especially against Jerusalem, , all the earth will celebrate Sukkot.

Zechariah 12:3

Moreover, in that day I will make Jerusalem a massive stone for all the people. All who try to lift it will be cut to pieces. Nevertheless, all the nations of the earth will be gathered together against her.

Zechariah 12:9-10

It will happen in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. Then I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication, when they will look toward Me whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son and grieve bitterly for Him, as one grieves for a firstborn.

Zechariah 13:1-2

In that day a spring will be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and impurity. It will happen in that day (it is a declaration of YHVH Tseva'ot) that I will erase the names of the idols from the land and they will no longer be remembered. Furthermore, I will remove the prophets and the unclean spirit from the land.

Zechariah 14:1-9

Behold, a day of YHVH is coming when your plunder will be divided in your midst. I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to wage war. The city shall be captured, the houses ransacked and the women ravished. Half of the city will be exiled but the remainder of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then YHVH will go forth and fight against those nations as He fights in a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives which lies to the east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a huge valley. Half of the mountain will move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you will flee through My mountain valley because the mountain valley will reach to Azel. Yes, you will flee like you fled from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then YHVH my God will come and all the kedoshim with Him. In that day there will be no light, cold or frost. It will be a day known only to YHVH, neither day nor night - even in the evening time there will be light. Moreover, in that day living waters will flow from Jerusalem, half toward the eastern sea and half toward the western sea, both in the

summer and in the winter. YHVH will then be King over all the earth. In that day YHVH will be Echad and His Name Echad.

Zechariah 14:12

Now this is the plague with which YHVH will strike all the peoples that wage war against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they are standing on their feet; their eyes will rot in their sockets; and their tongues will rot in their mouths.

Zechariah 14:16-19

Then all the survivors from all the nations that attacked Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, YHVH Tseva'ot, and to celebrate Sukkot. Furthermore, if any of the nations on earth do not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, YHVH Tseva'ot, they will have no rain. If the Egyptians do not go up and celebrate, they will have no rain. Instead, there will be the plague that YHVH will inflict on the nations that do not go up to celebrate Sukkot. This will be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not go up to celebrate Sukkot.

The Creator of the universe, long before you existed, set in motion a plan to give you freedom - you can choose death or you can choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20

I call on heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have presented you with life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving YHVH your God, paying attention to what he says and clinging to him - for that is the purpose of your life!

We have the promise of His glory and our future.

music video: *Unto The Lamb*

This is our perpetual celebration - God with us!