

Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (NIV) The Greek word interpreted as “made His dwelling”, *skenoō*, is derived from *tabernacle*, and could also be interpreted as “to have one’s tabernacle”.

Jesus Born on the Feast of Tabernacles?

The Feast of Tabernacles may be the day that Jesus was born. Since the fourth century, December 25 has been recognized as the day of His birth, but it is generally recognized that this date was likely set due to the “Christianization” of pagan holidays. December 25th was a pagan holiday called Saturnalia, which celebrated the winter solstice. Many different factors point to Jesus’ birth being in the fall rather than the winter. Scholars have calculated that John the Baptist was likely born on Passover based on the schedule that the priests served in the Temple, since John’s father, Zechariah, was performing Temple duties when the angel appeared to him and prophesied John’s birth. Zechariah’s wife Elizabeth became pregnant shortly after. We know that Elizabeth was six months pregnant when the angel appeared to Mary to tell her of Jesus’ birth (Luke 1:26-31). If John the Baptist was born on Passover, Jesus was born six months later, during the month of Tishri, the month of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Another factor which suggests that Jesus was born on the Feast of Tabernacles is that we know that there was “no room in the inn” when Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem. The Feast of Tabernacles was one of the three feasts when the men of Israel were required to appear before the Lord (Deut. 16:16). Since everyone would travel to Jerusalem to appear before the Lord, the surrounding area would likely be very crowded, thus “no room in the inn”. We also know that shepherds were watching their flocks in the fields when Jesus was born. The flocks around Bethlehem were normally brought into a “sheepfold” or corral during the winter (approximately November through February).

How appropriate if Jesus (*Immanuel*, God with us) should make His dwelling place with us during the Feast of Tabernacles.

A custom on the Feast of Tabernacles during the time of Jesus was a ceremony of pouring water. On the last day of the feast, called Hoshanna Rabbah, a priest would fill a water pitcher from the Pool of Siloam and carry it back to the Temple, followed by a procession of the people dancing, singing and chanting Psalms. The procession circled the altar seven times then the priest poured the water at the Temple altar. This was followed by rejoicing.

It was at this time during the Feast of Tabernacles, that Jesus made the declaration found in John 7:37-39:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.” (NIV)

A Theory of Jesus’ Future Fulfillment of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles is a time to rejoice! Many believe that on this day, the Messiah Jesus will establish His kingdom on earth for one thousand years.

The saints reigning with Jesus for one thousand years is described in Revelation 20:4:

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and Judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshipped the beast or his

image, and had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand; and they came to life and reigned with Messiah for a thousand years.”

When Jesus establishes His kingdom on earth, all nations will celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16-19):

Then the survivors from all the nations that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD Almighty, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. (NIV)

Summary of Jesus’ Possible Fulfillment of the Fall Feasts

“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.” — Matthew 24:42

Jesus fulfilled the Spring Feasts to the letter! Following the patterns suggested by the Fall Feasts, it is highly probable that He will come to catch away His bride to Heaven (fulfilling the Feast of Trumpets) for seven years during the tribulation (the Days of Awe) and will celebrate the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (fulfilling the Jewish wedding ceremony). He will then return to earth to judge and cleanse the people (fulfilling the Day of Atonement) and establish His kingdom on earth (fulfilling the Feast of Tabernacles).

1948 saw the re-establishment of Israel as a nation. Jewish people from all nations are returning to their land. Newspaper accounts of world events appear to be taken directly from Bible prophecy. Be on the alert! This is an exciting time to be a living witness of Jesus.

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence...” — 1 Peter 3:15.

We urge you to study the various references below. Also, see our pamphlet about the Spring Feasts, our booklet “Unlocking God’s Prophecy - Jesus Fulfills the Seven Feasts of Israel” or our web site.

References

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Jesus Will Fulfill The Fall Feasts

God’s plan for the salvation of humanity is shown by the seven feasts He gave to ancient Israel in Leviticus 23. God told the people of Israel to celebrate these feasts as “lasting ordinances.” The seven feasts are patterns that describe the two comings of Jesus Christ, whose actual Hebrew name is Yeshua Ha Mashiach. In Hebrew, Yeshua means “Salvation” and Ha Mashiach (English: the Messiah) means “the Anointed One”.

The four Spring Feasts describe the first coming of Jesus. The practices of each of these Spring Feasts clearly depict the death and resurrection of Jesus.

- **Jesus is the Passover Lamb of God.** *“behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” — John 1:29.*
- **Jesus is the Unleavened Bread of Life.** *“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh.” — John 6:51*
- **Jesus is the First Fruits.** *“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep” — 1 Corinthians 15:20.*
- **Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost).** *“And when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...” — Acts 2:1-4*

Because Jesus’ fulfillment of the Spring Feasts is so exact, it seems reasonable that He will also fulfill the remaining Fall Feasts.

Feasts Are Divine Appointments - Shadows of Things to Come

How do we know that God intended the feasts to show His plan for salvation? One of the clues that indicates the feasts have more significance than mere tradition and remembrance is found in Leviticus 23:4:

“These are the appointed times of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at the times appointed for them...”
The Hebrew translated as “holy convocations” actually means “rehearsals”. These feasts then were appointed times of rehearsals for events that were to occur in the future. Paul provides the same conclusion when he refers to the feasts as *shadows of things to come* and states that the true *substance belongs to Christ* in Colossians 2:16-17.

First century believers in Jesus understood that the feasts symbolized God’s plan for salvation of man through Jesus, the long awaited Messiah. They continued to practice the celebrations, but with new joy and understanding of the substance that was the Messiah!

How Might Jesus Fulfill the Fall Feasts?

The accuracy in which Jesus fulfilled the spring feasts at His first appearance is inescapable! By examining the three fall feasts more closely, we can understand how Jesus may complete God's plan for man through their fulfillment.

Feast of Trumpets (Yom T'ruah, Rosh HaShanah)

Numbers 29:1-11

It is useful to understand the Hebraic mindset in order to better picture the symbolism of Jesus' fulfillment of the feasts. In Jewish eschatology, the Feast of Trumpets is a solemn time of self evaluation. On this day, it is said that God writes the names of those found completely righteous into the Book of Life, those found completely wicked are written into the Book of Death and those found neither completely righteous or completely wicked await the Day of Atonement for their judgment. The Feast of Trumpets is traditionally a two-day feast, celebrated on the first and second days of Tishri (see Fall Feasts on God's Calendar). In Numbers 29:1-11, God instructed the Hebrews to observe a holy convocation or *appointment* on the first day of the seventh month by resting, blowing the trumpets and making offerings by fire to the Lord. The Feast of Trumpets is also called Rosh HaShanah or "the head of the year". Jewish people celebrate this day as the day of the creation of the world.

Jesus' Possible Fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets

"And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other." — Matthew 24:31

The catching away of those who believe in Jesus, commonly referred to as "the rapture", is clearly associated with the sound of the trumpet, as can be seen by reading the following Scriptures:

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air..." — I Thessalonians 4:16-17

"Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed." — I Corinthians 15:51-52

Jewish eschatology is consistent with this view. The Rabbis taught that when 6000 years (or six "days") of human history are completed, the seventh day, the Day of the Lord will come. On the Feast of Trumpets, Tishri 1, the shofar will sound and all the righteous will be resurrected. The righteous will go to the "gates" for the coronation of the King, the Messiah and then be united with the Messiah as His bride.

Days of Awe (Yamin noraim)

Marriage Supper of the Lamb

The days between the Feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement are called "the Days of Awe". The Days of Awe are devoted to self examination and repentance from one's sin and preparation for judgment on the Day of Atonement. In Jewish eschatology, "the Days of Awe" are representative of a "day of trouble" (Jer. 30:6) that is to come upon the earth before the second coming of the Messiah. This

"day of trouble" is also referred to as the "birthpangs of the Messiah". That time of trouble is commonly called "the tribulation." During that time of trouble on earth, the Lord will protect His bride:

"For in the day of trouble He will conceal me in His tabernacle; In the secret place of His tent He will hide me; He will lift me up on a rock" — Psalm 27:5

Rabbis have taught that after being resurrected on the Feast of Trumpets, the righteous would enter the chupah, or wedding canopy to spend seven years while the "day of trouble", the seven years of judgment occur on earth. By examining an ancient Jewish wedding, we can more clearly see the picture of the union of the church (the bride) with the Messiah (the Bridegroom).

When a man in ancient Israel married, he went to the bride's house with a "bride price" and made a contract (covenant) with the girl's father. If the father accepted the man and his bride price, the man would pour a glass of wine. If the girl drank it, it would indicate that she accepted the man's proposal and they were betrothed. The man would go away and prepare a wedding chamber for his bride. When the man's father deemed that the wedding chamber was ready, usually one to two years later, the man would return to the bride's house and "steal" her away "like a thief in the night" at an hour when no one would suspect. He would take her to the wedding chamber for seven days. During this time, the groom's father would hold a party to announce the marriage. At the end of the seventh day, the married couple would emerge from the chamber and partake of the marriage supper.

The ancient Jewish wedding is a picture of Jesus the Bridegroom and His bride, the church. The contract (covenant) was sealed at the last supper when Jesus shared the covenant cup with His disciples.

"And He said to them, 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.'" — Mark 14:24.

Jesus, in speaking to the Disciples after the last supper said the same words that any Jewish man would tell his betrothed.

"In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" — John 14:2,3.

And, of course, Jesus paid the "bride price" with His life. The marriage of the church to Jesus is described in several Bible texts.

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." — Revelation 19:7-8

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church." — Ephesians 5:31-32.

Day of Atonement (Yom haDin)

"On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement..." — Leviticus 23:27,

Jewish eschatology teaches that the Day of Atonement is the day in which the people of Israel are to be judged by God and the sins of the nation of Israel are atoned. The Day of Atonement is also referred to as "the Day of Redemption" and "the Day of Judgment". The people of Israel were instructed in Leviticus 23:32 to confess their sins to God for twenty-four hours prior to the Day of Atonement. On this day, God

would either grant or deny atonement for the coming year. As Leviticus 16:29-24 instructed, the high priest was to enter the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the people of Israel. As part of the atonement, two goats were selected. One goat was slain as a sacrificial atonement and the other was called the scape goat. The scape goat symbolically bore the sins of the nation of Israel away from the people. It was led into the wilderness and was pushed from a cliff to ensure that it did not inadvertently carry the sins back into the city.

Jesus' Possible Fulfillment of the Day of Atonement

Since the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the Day of Atonement cannot be properly observed by the rabbis. Without a proper place of sacrifice, there cannot be a sacrifice. Without a sacrifice there cannot be atonement. The first century rabbis made some substitutions that are supposed to provide for atonement, therefore the modern observance is very different than the ancient observance. As Christians, we know that Jesus has provided our atonement.

"...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood." — Romans 3:23-25 (NIV)

The Day of Atonement also may have a future fulfillment. The Day of Atonement may be the day Jesus will physically return to earth! The Bible clearly states Jesus will return immediately after the great tribulation.

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken. And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory." — Mark 13:24-26

Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot, Booths)

Leviticus 23:34-43

The Feast of Tabernacles or Booths begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (Tishri), after the crops were gathered. God instructed the Israelites to observe the Feast of Tabernacles by building and living in booths for seven days, to remember that the Israelites lived in booths when God brought them out of Egypt. Also remember that God dwelt with the Israelites when He brought them out of Egypt:

"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you." - Exodus 25:8

This feast is celebrated by a full week of rejoicing, dancing, singing and feasting and is called "Season of our Joy".

It is believed that the first American Thanksgiving was based on the Feast of Tabernacles, since the Puritans were followers of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Feast of Tabernacles is the seventh feast. It depicts the Lord's rest, just as the pattern which God designed in Genesis 2:2 suggests:

"And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done."

Jesus' Fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles

Just as God tabernacled with the Israelites during their 40 years in the desert, Jesus tabernacled with man in His first coming and will come again to tabernacle with man in His Messianic Kingdom. John 1:14 describes Jesus' first coming: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and*