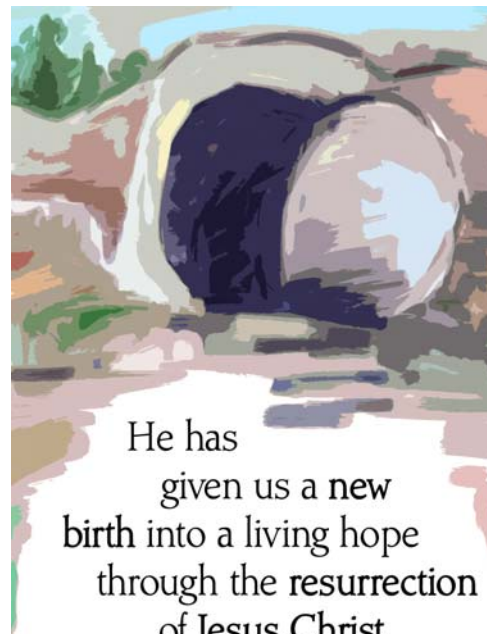


# WHEN WAS JESUS BORN?

His **First Birth** and His **Second Birth**



1 Peter 1:3, NRSV

Charles R. Williams

## **PREFACE:**

**In addition to a summary, this paper contains several articles which make very good and successful attempts at demonstrating Jesus was not born on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The first part is a summary of the facts. The two articles that follow are by several authors who go into greater detail. The last article, which is in the APPENDIX, is about Jesus' command to celebrate His second birth.**

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## WHEN WAS JESUS BORN? An Introduction Summary:

Almost all biblical scholars who have investigated the **scriptures and their implications** state confidently that Jesus was **not** born on that day. There are those of course who say, “What difference does it make?” The truth about anything is important, but especially the life of the Son of God.

The truth is, the celebration of the birth of Christ grew out of and was **associated with a pagan celebration** called Saturnalia, which commemorated the rebirth of the sun god. This was based on the **winter solstice**, which occurs some time between December 20 and December 23 each year, and is the shortest day of the year. The pagans chose December 25 to celebrate; because they could measure the fact that the sun was rising higher, thus **the sun god was “reborn.”**

The best date we have regarding when December 25<sup>th</sup> was designated as the birth of Jesus is 354 A.D. This was hundreds of years after Christ’s birth (5 B.C. to 3 B.C.), after the building of His church (33 A.D.), and after the New Testament was written (43 A.D. to 95 A.D.). When pagans converted to Christianity, they held on to some of their festivals as customs and **reinvented them with a “Christian” slant**. The result was that the “birth of the Son of God” took the place of the “rebirth” of the sun god.

When was Jesus actually born? The time can be determined by relating the conception of Jesus with the conception of John. **Zacharias was serving as priest** according to the “division of Abijah” when he was told by an angel that his wife would give birth to a son named John. (Luke 5-7). The priests were divided into **24 courses** or divisions in order to take turns serving in the temple (1 Chronicles 24:1-19). Zacharias was “serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood,” (v. 8). We are then informed that “as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house...his wife **Elizabeth conceived...**” Luke 1:23-24. Other scriptures such as 1 Chronicles 9 and 2 Chronicles 23, help us to determine which Jewish month Zacharias’ service and Elizabeth’s conception occurred. The time calculated would be the Jewish months of Sivan or early Tammuz.

We must now relate the conception of John with the conception of Jesus. Luke 1:26-38 tells us that “**in the sixth month**” [of Elizabeth’s pregnancy] Mary was informed that she would conceive a son. The angel tells Mary, “Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has **also conceived a son** in her old age; and this is now **the sixth month** for her...” v. 36. If John the Baptist was conceived in the two week period after the Jewish month Sivan 19<sup>th</sup>, **Jesus would have been conceived about six months later** at the end of the Hebrew month, Kislev or at the latest, the beginning of the Jewish month, Tevet (**See Charts:** pp. 5, 10, 16-19),

After the angel’s visit to Mary, she “arose in those days and...greeted Elizabeth...**the baby [John] leaped in her womb...**and Mary remained about three months and returned to her house,” vs. 39-41, 56. Since Elizabeth was six months pregnant when Mary went to see her, and Mary stayed with her three months, then Mary stayed right up to the time of John’s birth (6 months + three months = 9 months). Nine months from the time of John’s conception in early Tamuz would bring us to the Passover of **the Jewish year 3756** in the first month called Nisan. This **Hebrew date fell in the month of** our modern calendar, **March 5 B.C.** Since **Jesus** was conceived six months after John the Baptist was conceived, He would also have been **born six months after John**. Jesus was born in **September**.

Charles R. Williams

## On What Day Was Jesus Born?

While much of the world celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ on the 25th of December, can the actual day of Jesus' birth be determined from scripture? This question will be explored in some detail, and will yield a result that is quite intriguing. The first passage we will consider begins with the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias:

Luke 1:5---There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Luke 1:8---And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course.

Luke 1:23---And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

Luke 1:24---And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived...

The clue given to us here is that Zacharias was of the "course" of Abijah.

### The 24 Courses of the Temple Priesthood:

**Josephus 7:14:14:7:** But David, being desirous of ordaining his son king of all the people, called together their rulers to Jerusalem, with the priests and the Levites; and having first numbered the Levites, he found them to be thirty-eight thousand, from thirty years old to fifty; out of which he appointed twenty-three thousand to take care of the building of the temple, and out of the same, six thousand to be judges of the people and scribes, four thousand for porters to the house of God, and as many for singers, to sing to the instruments which David had prepared, as we have said already. He divided them also into courses: and when he had separated the priests from them, he found of these priests twenty-four courses, sixteen of the house of Eleazar, and eight of that of Ithamar; and he ordained that one course should minister to God eight days, from sabbath to sabbath. And thus were the courses distributed by lot, in the presence of David, and Zadok and Abiathar the high priests, and of all the rulers; and that course which came up first was written down as the first, and accordingly the second, and so on to the twenty-fourth; and this partition hath remained to this day. — Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 7, Chapter 14, Verse 14, Paragraph 7.

King David on God's instructions (1 Chr 28:11-13) had divided the sons of Aaron into 24 groups (1 Chr 24:1-4), to setup a schedule by which the Temple of the Lord could be staffed with priests all year round in an orderly manner. After the 24 groups of priests were established, lots were drawn to determine the sequence in which each group would serve in the Temple. (1 Chr 24: 7-19). That sequence is as follows:

(See the next page)

1 Chr. 24:7	1. Jehoiarib	2. Jedaiah
1 Chr. 24:8	3. Harim	4. Seorim
1 Chr. 24:9	5. Malchijah	6. Mijamin
1 Chr. 24:10	7. Hakkoz	8. Abijah
1 Chr. 24:11	9. Jeshuah	10. Shecaniah
1 Chr. 24:12	11. Eliashib	12. Jakim
1 Chr. 24:13	13. Huppah	14. Jeshebeab
1 Chr. 24:14	15. Bilgah	16. Immer
1 Chr. 24:15	17. Hezir	18. Apses
1 Chr. 24:17	21. Jachim	22. Gamul
1 Chr. 24:18	23. Delaiah	24. Maaziah

1 Chron. 24:19---These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

Now each one of the 24 "courses" of priests would begin and end their service in the Temple on the Sabbath, a tour of duty being for one week (2 Chr 23:8, 1 Chr 9:25). On three occasions during the year, all the men of Israel were required to travel to Jerusalem for festivals of the Lord, so on those occasions all the priests would be needed in the Temple to accommodate the crowds. Those three festivals were Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Deut 16:16).

### **The Yearly Cycle of Service in the Temple:**

The Jewish calendar begins in the spring, during the month of Nisan, so the first "course" of priests, would be that of the family of Jehoiarib, who would serve for one week, Sabbath to Sabbath. The second week would then be the responsibility of the family of Jedaiah. The third week would be the feast of Unleavened Bread, and all priests would be present for service. Then the schedule would resume with the third course of priests, the family of Harim. By this plan, when the 24th course was completed, the general cycle of courses would repeat. This schedule would cover 51 weeks or 357 days, enough for the lunar Jewish calendar (about 354 days). So, in a period of a year, each group of priests would serve in the Temple twice on their scheduled course, in addition to the 3 major festivals, for a total of about five weeks of duty.

### **The Conception of John the Baptist:**

Now back to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist.

Luke 1:23---And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

Luke 1:24---And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived...

Beginning with the first month, Nisan, in the spring (March-April), the schedule of the priest's courses would result with Zacharias serving during the 10th week of the

year. This is because he was a member of the course of Abia (Abijah), the 8th course, and both the Feast of Unleavened Bread (15-21 Nisan) and Pentecost (6 Sivan) would have occurred before his scheduled duty. This places Zacharias' administration in the Temple as beginning on the second Sabbath of the third month, Sivan (May-June).

	1st Month	2nd Month	3rd Month
	Abib - Nisan (March - April)	Zif - Iyyar (April - May)	Sivan (May - June)
First Week	Jehoiarib (1)	Seorim (4)	All Priests (Pentecost)
Second Week	Jedaiah (2)	Malchijah (5)	<b>Abijah (8)</b>
Third Week	All Priests (Feast of Unleavened Bread)	Mijamin (6)	Jeshuah (9)
Fourth Week	Harim (3)	Hakkoz (7)	Shecaniah (10)

Having completed his Temple service on the third Sabbath of Sivan, Zacharias returned home and soon conceived his son John. So John the Baptist was probably conceived shortly after the third Sabbath of the month of Sivan. **NOTE:** The word “after” in Luke 1:24 is from the Greek word *meta* which means “followed in sequence, what came next, and proximity.” After he fulfilled his days, he went home, and right afterward John was conceived.

### **The Conception of Jesus Christ:**

Now the reason that the information about John is important is because according to Luke, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy:

Luke 1:24---And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,  
 Luke 1:25---Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.  
 Luke 1:26---And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,  
 Luke 1:27---To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Note that verse 26 above refers to the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, not Elul, the sixth month of the Hebrew calendar, and this is made plain by the context of verse 24 and again in verse 36:

Luke 1:36---And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Mary stayed with Elizabeth for the last 3 months of her pregnancy, until the time that John was born.

Luke 1:56---And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Luke 1:57---Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Now working from the information about John's conception late in the third month, Sivan, and advancing six months, we arrive late in the 9th month of Kislev (Nov-Dec) for the time frame for the *conception* of Jesus. It is notable here that the first day of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, is celebrated on the 25th day of Kislev, and Jesus is called the light of the world (John 8:12, 9:5, 12:46). This does not appear to be a mere coincidence. In the book of John, Hanukkah is called the feast of dedication (John 10:22). Hanukkah is an *eight* day festival of rejoicing, celebrating deliverance from enemies by the relighting of the menorah in the rededicated Temple, which according to the story, stayed lit miraculously for eight days on only one day's supply of oil.

### **The Birth of John the Baptist:**

Based on a conception shortly after the third Sabbath of the month of Sivan, projecting forward an average term of about 10 lunar months (40 weeks), we arrive in the month of Nisan. It would appear that John the Baptist may have been born in the middle of the month, which would coincide with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It is interesting to note, that even today, it is customary for the Jews to set out a special goblet of wine during the Passover Seder meal, in anticipation of the arrival of Elijah that week, which is based on the prophecy of Malachi:

Mal 4:5---Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Jesus identified John as the "Elijah" that the Jews had expected:

Mat 17:10---And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

Mat 17:11---And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.

Mat 17:12---But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

Mat 17:13---Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

The angel that appeared to Zacharias in the temple also indicated that John would be the expected "Elias":

Luke 1:17---And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

So then, the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of the 1st month, Nisan, and this is a likely date for the birth of John the Baptist, the expected "Elijah."

### **The Birth of Jesus Christ:**

Since Jesus was conceived six months after John the Baptist, and we have established a likely date for John's birth, we need only move six months farther down the Jewish calendar to arrive at a likely date for the birth of Jesus. From the 15th day of the 1st month, Nisan, we go to the 15th day of the 7th month, Tishri. And what do we find on that date? It is the festival of Tabernacles! The 15th day of Tishri begins the third and last festival of the year to which all the men of Israel were to gather in Jerusalem for Temple services. (Lev 23:34)

### **(Immanuel)**

Isa 7:14---Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name *Immanuel*.

Immanuel means "God with us". The Son of God had come to dwell with, or *tabernacle* on earth with His people.

John 1:14---And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot), occurs five days after the Day of Atonement, and is a festival of rejoicing and celebration of deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Leviticus 23:42-43).

Luke 2:7---And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 2:8---And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 2:9---And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Luke 2:10---And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke 2:11---For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

Why was there no room at the inn? Bethlehem is only about 5 miles from Jerusalem, and all the men of Israel had come to attend the festival of Tabernacles as required by the law of Moses. Every room for miles around Jerusalem would have been already taken by pilgrims, so all that Mary and Joseph could find for shelter was a stable. During Tabernacles,



everyone was to live in temporary booths (Sukkot), as a memorial to Israel's pilgrimage out of Egypt - Lev. 23:42-43. The birth of the Savior, in what amounted to a temporary dwelling rather than a house, signaled the coming deliverance of God's people from slavery to sin, and their departing for the promised land, which is symbolized by Tabernacles

Also of note is the fact that the Feast of Tabernacles is an *eight* day feast (Lev 23:36, 39). Why eight days? It may be because an infant was dedicated to God by performing circumcision on the *eighth* day after birth:

Luke 2:21---And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

So the infant Jesus would have been circumcised on the eighth and last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a Sabbath day. The Jews today consider this a separate festival from Tabernacles, and they call it Shemini Atzeret.

### **The Baptism and Death of Jesus:**

There is another indication in scripture as to when Jesus was born.

Mark 1:14---Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,  
Mark 1:15---And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Jesus said this after His baptism, upon emerging from 40 days in the wilderness, when He began His preaching ministry. The book of Daniel gives us the "time" or prophesy Jesus was speaking about.

Dan 9:25---Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.

Dan 9:26---And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

Dan 9:27---And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.

It is very likely that by understanding this prophecy and date of the decree when it began, the wise men knew exactly when to look for the Christ child. The 70th week of Daniel, a period of 7 literal years, began with "Messiah the Prince." Messiah means anointed, and Jesus was publically anointed by the Holy Spirit at His baptism. Daniel 9:26-27 tells us that the Messiah would be "cut off" (crucified) in the "midst of the (70th) week", which is to say the Messiah would be crucified 3 1/2 years after His baptism.

Luke 3:22---And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Luke 3:23---And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age...

Luke hints that at His baptism Jesus became about thirty, so it was likely that His birthday coincided, more or less, with His baptism (A Levitical priest began his service at the age of 30, Numbers 4:3). So His baptism agrees with the time of Tabernacles, because 3 years and 6 months later at Passover, Jesus was crucified exactly and precisely as Daniel had prophesied, in the midst of the 70th week. Knowing the year of His baptism from understanding Daniel, the wise men needed only to subtract 30 from it to know the year the Messiah would be born.

### **(The Star of Bethlehem)**

The Savior's birth was more clearly revealed in the Old Testament (Daniel 9). The magi learned with joy that His coming was near, and that the whole world was to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of the Lord. The wise men had seen a mysterious light in the heavens upon that night when the glory of God flooded the hills of Bethlehem. As the light faded, a luminous star appeared, and lingered in the sky. It was neither a fixed star nor a planet, and the phenomenon excited the keenest interest. Yet they were impressed that the star was of special import to them. They consulted priests and philosophers, and searched the scrolls of the ancient records. The prophecy of Balaam had declared, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel." Num. 24:17. Could this strange star have been sent as a harbinger of the Promised One? The magi had welcomed the light of heaven-sent truth; now it was shed upon them in brighter rays. Through dreams they were instructed to go in search of the newborn Prince.

### **Conclusion:**

So, if you have followed the above reasoning, based on the scriptural evidence, a case can apparently be made that Jesus Christ was born on the 15th day of the month of Tishri, on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which corresponds to the **September - October** timeframe of our present calendar!

**SEE THE CHART BELOW:**

Jewish month	Begins the New moon of	John the Baptist	Jesus
1. Abib / Nisan	March-April	Birth of John 15 Nisan	4
2. Zif / Iyyar	April-May		5
3. Sivan	May-June	Conception of John after 3rd Sabbath	6
4. Tammuz	June-July	1	7
5. Ab / Av	July-August	2	8
6. Elul	August-September	3	9
7. Ethanim / Tishri	September-October	4	Birth of Jesus 15 Tishri
8. Bul / Marheshvan / Heshvan	October-November	5	
9. Chisleu / Chislev / Kislev	November- December	6	Conception of Jesus 25 Kislev ?
10. Tebeth / Tevet	December-January	7	1
11. Shebat / Shevat	January-February	8	2
12. Adar	February-March	9	3

Article by Michael Scheifler  
Edited by Charles Williams

# JESUS' REAL BIRTHDAY

Article by Bryan T. Huie  
Edited by Charles Williams

Most biblical scholars and preachers readily admit that they know Christ was **not** born on December 25th. However, they claim that this day is as good as any other to celebrate the birth of Jesus, despite the fact that it was originally a pagan celebration called Saturnalia which commemorated the birth of the sun god at the time of the Winter Solstice.

## Pagan Worship Warnings:

God had this to say about appropriating pagan methods of worship and trying to honor Him with them:

**DEUTERONOMY 12:28, 30, 31a, 32**---28 "Observe and obey all these words which I command you, that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do what is good and right in the sight of the LORD your God...30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 31 "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way...32 **Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it. (NKJV)**

Celebrating the birth of Christ is an invention of men and not authorized by God.

## Searching for the Clues: The Priestly Courses

Few know that there is a biblical way to determine when the Messiah was actually born. We can do this by relating the conception and birth of Jesus (*Yeshua*) with the conception and birth of John the Baptist.

Let's begin our scriptural detective work in the 1st chapter of Luke:

**LUKE 1:5**---There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, **of the division of Abijah**. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. (**NKJV**)

First, we need to understand what "the division of Abijah" was. We find in 1 Chronicles 24:1-19 that the descendants of Aaron's 24 grandsons (the sons of Eleazer and Ithamar) were divided into 24 divisions or courses for the purpose of serving at the Temple. 1 Chronicles 24:10 tells us that **the 8th division of service was assigned to Abijah's descendants**.

Each of these divisions served at the Temple for an **eight-day period** (1 Chr. 9:25). The service began and ended on the weekly Sabbath (2 Chr. 23:8). In addition to their normal service, **all 24 courses served at the Temple during the three holy seasons every year**. The Jewish *Mishnah* indicates that each course served a week during the first half of the

year, the three annual festival weeks, and a week during the last half of the year, for a total of five weeks during a normal year.

A normal year on the Hebrew calendar consists of twelve lunar months of 29 or 30 days, for a total of 354 days. This is about 11 days less than a solar year (365.24 days). During a regular Jewish year (which occurs 12 times in a 19-year cycle), 51 weeks of coverage would be needed to ensure that the Temple was cared for every week throughout the year.

24 (first half of the year) + 3 (festival weeks) + 24 (second half of the year) = 51 weeks

Between the 1st and the 9th week of the year, two of the three festival times when all 24 courses served occurred. Therefore, **the course of Abijah**, the 8th course, **would serve its first regular week during the 9th or 10th week of the year** (depending on how the Feast of Weeks fell on the calendar).

**NOTE:** For reference, there is an annotated **Jewish Calendar** for the period of time under consideration at the end of this article on page 8.

### **The Conception of John the Baptist:**

With that background, now let's review the conception of John the Baptist:

**LUKE 1:8-25**---8 So it was, that **while he** [Zacharias] **was serving as priest before God in the order of his division**, 9 **according to the custom of the priesthood**, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 **He will also go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah**, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time." 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the Temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the Temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. 23 And so it was, **as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house**. 24 Now **after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived**; and she hid herself **five months**, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." (NKJV)

**NOTE:** The Greek word that is translated “**after**” comes from the Greek word *meta* which means “followed in sequence, what came next, proximity.” In other words, Elizabeth conceived right after, in close proximity to, in sequence after Zacharias had completed his service at the temple as a priest. The “**those days**” were the days Zacharias had spent in service as a priest, but after the Lord appeared to him and gave him the prophecy of bearing a son through his wife Elizabeth, he came out of the temple, went home to be with his wife, and the next thing he did was to cause his wife Elizabeth to conceive a baby that would be called “John.”

Zacharias' wife Elizabeth would have conceived John the Baptist **shortly following the week of his service** at the Temple. This would have been sometime in late *Sivan* or early *Tammuz*.

**NOTE: See the “Jewish Calendar” on pages 16-19.**

### **The Date for Mary and the Conception of Jesus:**

Now let's switch our focus and take a look at Elizabeth's young relative, Mary:

**LUKE 1:26-38**---26 Now **in the sixth month** [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, **you will conceive** in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." 34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, **Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her** who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible." 38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (NKJV)

The Holy Spirit likely overshadowed Mary very soon after her encounter with the angel Gabriel. If John the Baptist was conceived in the two week period after *Sivan* 19, Jesus would have been conceived about six months later, at the end of the Hebrew month *Kislev* or the beginning of the month *Tevet*. Mary would probably have conceived Jesus sometime from *Kislev* 24 to *Tevet* 7. *Kislev* 25 is the beginning of the Feast of *Chanukah*, also known as the Festival of Lights. This eight-day feast continues to *Tevet* 2.

**NOTE: See the “Jewish Calendar” on pages 16-19.**

Jesus observed the Feast of *Chanukah* (also called the "Feast of Dedication" in John 10:22) while he was on earth. John gives us an indication that Jesus was in fact conceived during the Festival of Lights (*Chanukah*) when he speaks of him at the beginning of his Gospel:

**JOHN 1:4**---In Him was life, and the life was the **light** of men. 5 And the **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the **light**, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that **light**, but was sent to bear witness of that **light**. 9 **That was the true light** which gives **light** to every man coming into the world. (NKJV)

Quickly after Gabriel's visit, Mary went to see her relative Elizabeth:

**LUKE 1:39-41**---Now **Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste**, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (NKJV)

**LUKE 1:56**---And **Mary remained with her about three months**, and returned to her house. (NKJV)

It appears that Mary stayed with Elizabeth right up to the time for her to give birth. The average time for the gestation of a human baby is nine months/40 weeks/280 days. Nine months from the time of John's conception in early *Tamuz* would bring us to Passover of the Jewish year 3756 in the 1st month called *Nisan*. This Hebrew date fell in the month of March in 5 B.C.

**NOTE: See the "Jewish Calendar" on page 16.**

**LUKE 1:57**---Now Elizabeth's **full time came for her to be delivered**, and she brought forth a son. (NKJV)

It's highly symbolic that John the Baptist was born at the time of Passover. Even to this very day, there is still an expectation by religious Jews of the coming of Elijah the prophet during the time of Passover (Mal. 4:5-6). In fact, a cup is set for Elijah at the annual Passover *seder*, and children symbolically check for him at the door during the service. As Gabriel prophesied and Jesus confirmed (Matt. 11:14), John the Baptist was the preliminary Elijah to come before the Messiah.

Signs in the heavens over Jerusalem on the 15th of *Nisan* in the Jewish year 3756 heralded the birth of John the Baptist. On that night, just after sunset, a spectacular lunar eclipse was visible from Jerusalem.

Since Jesus was conceived during *Chanukah* (Hanukkah), six months after John the Baptist, he would also have been born six months after John:

**LUKE 2:1-7**---And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own

city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, **the days were completed for her to be delivered.** 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NKJV)

### **The Date for Jesus' Birth:**

Since John was born on Passover, the 15th day of *Nisan* (the 1st Jewish month), Jesus would have been born six months later on the 15th day of *Tishri* (the 7th Jewish month). The 15th day of the 7th month begins the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34-35), also known as *Sukkot*. Jesus was born on the 1st day of the Feast of Tabernacles! In the year 5 B.C., this fell in the **month of September**.

This explains why there was no room at the inn for Joseph and Mary. A multitude of Jewish pilgrims from all over the Middle East had come to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, as God required (Deut. 16:16). Bethlehem, which was only a few miles outside of Jerusalem, was also overflowing with visitors at this time because of the Feast.

Just as it was six months earlier, signs in the heavens over Jerusalem on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles (15 *Tishri*, 3757) proclaimed the birth of the prophesied Messiah. Another remarkable lunar eclipse of the full moon was visible in Israel on this night also.

In addition to the hint of Jesus' conception during *Chanukah*, we also find an allusion to his birth during the Feast of Tabernacles in John's Gospel:

**JOHN 1:14**---And the Word became flesh, and did TABERNACLE among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth. (YLT)

The Greek word translated "tabernacle" above is *eskenosen*. This word is a form of *skenoo* (#4637 in *Strong's Greek Concordance*). While it is usually translated "dwelt," *Strong's* says this word literally means: "to fix one's tabernacle, have one's tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent), tabernacle . . ."

Eight days after his birth, in accordance with the Law of Moses, Jesus was circumcised on the Last Great Day, another holy day of God (Lev. 23:36).

**LUKE 2:21**---And **when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the child**, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (NKJV)

The truth of Jesus' birth is much greater than the pagan celebration that has been appropriated for his supposed honor. This truth reaffirms the need to keep what God has made holy for Christians in order to better understand His plan for mankind. God has assigned the first day of the week (52 of them) to be known as "the Lord's Day" when Jesus' disciples gather together to worship God through partaking of the Lord's Supper, singing, praying, giving, and teaching the word of God.



# Calendar for Jesus' Birth Date:

## CONCEPTION & BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST & JESUS (based on the Gospel of Luke)

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
ניסן <i>Nisan</i> 3755							1								18	Mar. 6 B.C.
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		26	27	28	29	30	31	1	Apr. 6 B.C.
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
	30								16							
אייר <i>Iyar</i> 3755		1	2	3	4	5	6			17	18	19	20	21	22	Apr. 6 B.C.
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		30	1	2	3	4	5	6	May 6 B.C.
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	28	29							14	15						
סיון <i>Sivan</i> 3755			1	2	3	4	5	Zacharias' service in the Temple (week 8 plus week of Pentecost-Luke 1:5- 23)			16	17	18	19	20	May 6 B.C.
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		28	29	30	31	1	2	3	June 6 B.C.
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	27	28	29	30					11	12	13	14				
תמוז <i>Tamuz</i> 3755					1	2	3	John the Baptist's conception (Luke 1:24)					15	16	17	June 6 B.C.
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		25	26	27	28	29	30	1	July 6 B.C.
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
	25	26	27	28	29				9	10	11	12	13			
אב <i>Av</i> 3755						1	2							14	15	July 6 B.C.
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		30	31	1	2	3	4	5	Aug. 6 B.C.
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

אלול <i>Elul</i> 3755	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Aug. 6 B.C. Sep. 6 B.C.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		13	14	15	16	17	18	19		
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		27	28	29	30	31	1	2		
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
	29								10								
תשרי <i>Tishri</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sep. 6 B.C. Oct. 6 B.C.	
		1	2	3	4	5	6			11	12	13	14	15	16		
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
	28	29	30						8	9	10						
חשוון <i>Chesvan</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Oct. 6 B.C. Nov. 6 B.C.	
				1	2	3	4					11	12	13	14		
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		15	16	17	18	19	20	21		
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		29	30	31	1	2	3	4		
	26	27	28	29	30				5	6	7	8	9				
כסלו <i>Kislev</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab	The Festival of Lights, aka the Feast of Dedication ( <i>Chanukah</i> ) - Kislev 25- Tevet 2	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Nov. 6 B.C. Dec. 6 B.C.	
						1	2							10	11		
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			12	13	14	15	16	17		18
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16			19	20	21	22	23	24		25
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23			26	27	28	29	30	1		2
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30			3	4	5	6	7	8		9
טבת <i>Tevet</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab	Jesus' conception during <i>Chanukah</i> (Luke 1:35)	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Dec. 6 B.C. Jan. 5 B.C.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		17	18	19	20	21	22	23		
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		31	1	2	3	4	5	6		
	29								7								
שבט <i>Shevat</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Jan. 5 B.C.	
		1	2	3	4	5	6			8	9	10	11	12	13		
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		21	22	23	24	25	26	27		

	21	22	23	24	25	26	27		28	29	30	31	1	2	3	Feb. 5 B.C.	
	28	29	30						4	5	6						
אדר <i>Adar</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Feb. 5 B.C.	
				1	2	3	4					7	8	9	10		
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		25	26	27	28	29	1	2	Mar. 5 B.C.	
	26	27	28	29					3	4	5	6					
ניסן <i>Nisan</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab	Birth of John the Baptist on 1st day of Passover ( <i>Pesach</i> )	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Mar. 5 B.C.	
					1	2	3							7	8	9	
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17			17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Apr. 5 B.C.
	25	26	27	28	29	30				31	1	2	3	4	5		
אייר <i>Iyar</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Apr. 5 B.C.	
							1								6		
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	May 5 B.C.	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		28	29	30	1	2	3	4		
סיון <i>Sivan</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	May 5 B.C.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21		19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		26	27	28	29	30	31	1	June 5 B.C.	
	29	30							2	3							
תמוז <i>Tamuz</i> 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	June 5 B.C.	
			1	2	3	4	5				4	5	6	7	8		
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19		16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	July 5	
	27	28	29						30	1	2						

																B.C.
אב Av 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	July 5 B.C.
				1	2	3	4					3	4	5	6	
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
	26	27	28	29	30				28	29	30	31	1			
אלול Elul 3756	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab		Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Aug. 5 B.C.
						1	2							2	3	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23		18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
	24	25	26	27	28	29			25	26	27	28	29	30		
תשרי Tishri 3757	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sab	Birth of Jesus on 1st day of Feast of Tabernacles ( <i>Sukkot</i> )	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Aug. 5 B.C. Sep. 5 B.C.
							1								31	
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22		15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29		22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
30							29									

### Celebrating the Second Birth of Jesus Every First Day of the Week

The early church celebrated the **second birth** of Jesus every first day of the week when they partook of the Lord's Supper. They did not, however, celebrate the virgin birth of Jesus when the second in the God-head became flesh. They taught the truth about it; however, they did not celebrate it. The early church met every first day of the week, the "Lord's Day," for worship, especially to partake of the Lord's Supper, which celebrates the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and the return of Christ (Matthew 26:26-30; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10). The first day of the week is very important because that is the day Jesus arose from the grave and when He built His church (Acts 2:1, 47). The records in the Bible tell us that Jesus was **born the first time** of the **virgin** Mary by the power in the seed of the Holy Spirit. At that point, He became man in flesh and God in the flesh (**Luke 2:1-40; John 1:1-3, 14**). However, Jesus also experienced a second birth.

There is no doubt that the arrival of the Son of God in human form was one of the greatest events in human history. Because of who He is, I am **not surprised that the world wants to celebrate His birth**. However, whatever we do regarding Deity, we need to make sure it is what He wants and not what pleases us. It is emphasized over and over again in scripture that what we **do and say** should be "in name of the Lord Jesus" (**Col. 3:17**). This means to say and do **what has been authorized by Jesus** because He is Lord, the One in charge, the One who has "been given all authority in heaven and on earth" (**Matthew 28:18**).

Our worship, according to Jesus, should be exercised in a very special way. Jesus said, "...the **true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**: for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (**John 4:23b-24**). Notice: Jesus used the words "will" and "truth" in these verses. This kind of worship **reflects what God wants**, not what we may want.

I was asked by an acquaintance, near the time of Christmas, **what I was going to do** in our congregation because of **Christmas**. I told him that we were going to **do the same thing** we always do every first day of the week: thank God, give Him the glory, and remember what Jesus did for us. His response was, "We really ought to **remember** His birth every day." That is so true. Because of circumstances, our conversation could not continue. If we had had more time, I would have shared the following:

The truth is, neither Jesus nor the apostles commanded us to observe the first birth of Jesus, the time He came in human form. Besides that, **Jesus was not born on December 25<sup>th</sup>**. All evidence in scripture points to His having been born in **September** around 5 B.C. to 3 B.C. Christmas was **first observed in 354 A.D.**, almost 400 years after the birth of Christ (See articles in this paper). **Why** did the apostles and first Christians not observe Christmas at all? It is because **Jesus did not command it**, nor did any of the New Testament writers. In other words, it was **not authorized by God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit**.

However, **Jesus did command us to observe His second birth in partaking of the Lord's Supper** (Matthew 26:26-30). The apostles gave us the example of when; every first day of the week (Acts 20:7), **BUT WHAT IS JESUS' SECOND BIRTH?** In **Acts 13:30-34**, Paul declares to his audience of Jews and Gentiles that what he is preaching to them is "**glad tidings**" in that "God raised up Jesus from the dead." "Glad tidings" are the same words used by the angels regarding the first birth of Jesus. Again, in Acts 13, the Holy Spirit uses them to describe Jesus' **second birth, when God raised Him from the dead**. In the

next verse of this text, Paul quotes from Psalm 2:7 where God announced 1,000 years before Jesus' virgin birth that He will "have begotten" Him when He "**raised Him from the dead.**" This word "begotten," which is used to describe the resurrection, means "to give birth to."

Not only that, but we have verses that refer to Jesus as the "**firstborn from the dead**" (Colossians 1:18). This phrase means that although Jesus died and was raised from the dead, He did not have to die again. **IT IS THAT BIRTH THAT WE OBSERVE EVERY FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. WHY?** Because Jesus commanded it! We believe in both births, the virgin birth and the resurrection; however, we observe on a regular basis the second birth in order to worship in spirit and truth.

### **Notice the differences in the first birth and the second birth:**

#### **The Identity of Christ:**

First birth: He took on flesh and became the Son of Man (Matthew 8:20).

Second birth: He was "declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the death" (Romans 1:3-4).

#### **The Position of Christ:**

First birth: He became weak and grew as a man (Luke 2:52).

Second birth: He was raised "with power" and was "given all power" (Romans 1:3-4; Matthew 28:18-20; Hebrews 5:4-5).

#### **The Power of Christ:**

First birth: He was humbled and weak (Philippians 2:7-8).

Second birth: He was given all power (Philippians 2:9-11; Matthew 28:18).

#### **The Purpose of Christ's birth:**

First birth: He was born to die for our sins (Luke 19:10).

Second birth: He was raised to die no more and became our High Priest (Romans 1:3-4; 5:9-10; 6:10; Hebrews 5:4-5, 9-10).

#### **The Nature of His work:**

First birth: He came to bear our sins (Hebrews 9:26).

Second birth: After being raised, He will never bear sins in this way again (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 9:28).

### **CONCLUSION:**

Both births are important because they were required so that we can have forgiveness of our sins and have the hope of eternal life. However, the virgin birth of Jesus and His death and burial would have been for nothing if He had not been born again through the resurrection, never to die again, but instead He ascended into heaven to be King of His Kingdom and Holy Nation, High Priest of His Royal Priesthood, Savior of His Body the Church, Head of His Body the Church, Groom to His Bride, Older Brother in the Household of God, and Chief Cornerstone of His spiritual Temple, the church, made of "living stones."

Have you experienced **your second birth**? Jesus said that we must be born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Water baptism (immersion), as commanded by Jesus through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), is a death, burial, and resurrection: "...baptized into Christ Jesus...baptized into His death...as Jesus was **raised** from the death...we also should walk in **newness** of life...**united together** in the likeness of His death...we shall also be in the likeness of His **resurrection**..." (Romans 6:3-16).

**Jesus was born again through His resurrection. Have you been born again through the burial and resurrection of baptism into the death of Christ, raised with Him? If not, why not now?**

Charles R. Williams