

**When was Jesus Born and When was Jesus Crucified?
The Chronology of the Life of Christ
by
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Revised – July 4, 2019

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You might say that it was when I was still a teenager and a relatively new believer that I started to realize there was a real problem in contemporary Biblical scholarship on the chronology of the life of Christ. That was over sixty years ago. Even then, I recognized that there were large disagreements among Christian scholars about when the important events in the life of Christ occurred. They not only disagreed about what the Bible said, they couldn't seem to make the Bible account of history agree with the contemporary historians' accounts of history.

As I first became exposed to the problem, I saw that different teachers and Biblical scholars would give wildly different dates for the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ. The birth of Christ was set variously from 6 BC to 1 AD by different sources. The same kinds of differences surrounded the date of the death of Christ. It was set variously from 29 AD to 33 AD. After just a few years of study it became apparent that none of the authorities I was reading had a chronology that was consistent with either the testimony of the scriptures or of recorded history.

For instance, 6 BC is a popular date given for Christ's birth, but it does not line up with what Luke tells us when he says that Jesus was nearly thirty in 26 AD (the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign). That is a gap of nearly 32 years. Another popular date for Christ's birth is 1 AD. That date is impossible for Jesus' birth, because history tells us indisputably that Herod the Great died in 4 BC, and both Matthew and Luke make it clear that Jesus was born before Herod died.

I discovered so many inconsistencies, that it began to challenge my faith in the veracity of the Gospel accounts. Eventually, I made a decision. I decided that the Gospels and the Word of God was true. I also concluded that at least some of the authorities were ill informed or didn't understand what they had read. As for the question of finding an accurate Chronology of the life of Christ, I decided that I could never figure it out, if these learned and earnest Bible scholars hadn't. I decided that I would just trust to God that there was an answer that vindicated His Word, even if I never found it.

If you are a Bible student, that is always a good plan because there will always be mysteries you don't understand in this lifetime. Besides, understanding the love of God in the scriptures, and living in the light of it, is far more important than chronologies. So, I dropped the matter, and never really went looking for a solution, but the question was always in the back of my mind.

However, in these later years, God has been gracious to me. He has dropped one piece of information after another into my lap. I would be reading something totally unrelated, and an obscure footnote would have a missing part of the puzzle. This happened time and again. Slowly the pieces started to resolve themselves into a logical and credible Chronology of the life of Christ. It reconciled all the New Testament passages, the Old Testament prophecies and the Secular History of that era into one seamless whole, and it demonstrated how the dates and feasts

of the Old Testament are foreshadows of Christ to an even greater degree than is generally realized. It also provoked the question; “If feast dates foreshadowed the events of the New Testament past, how much do they foreshadow the events of the New Testament future, like the Rapture of the Church, the Tribulation, and the Second Coming of Christ?” I will make some comments on this question near the end of this paper.

I pray this study will bless you, as it has blessed me, and will give you a greater depth of appreciation of how marvelous God’s design of time is.

Three Things to Understand

In arriving at this Chronology of Christ, I found that first there were three understandings I had to arrive at. You will also need to understand them as well to follow the foundation for my Chronology:

The first thing to understand is that the dates in the Bible, particularly the dates of the Feasts and Fasts, are often prophetically significant.

The second thing you need to understand it that the famous historian, Flavius Josephus, who lived in the 1st Century AD, was not just a Jewish historian. What many have failed to realize is that Josephus was also a Christian. He became a Christian before he wrote his second great historical work Antiquities of the Jews. That work covered the 1st Century BC and the 1st Century AD.

The third thing you need to understand is the Jewish calendar, its history, and how it works.^a

These three things seem to be unfamiliar to many people including some Biblical scholars, so I will endeavor to present them to you as briefly and effectively as I can on the following pages.

^a *The web site <http://www.genealogy.org/~scottle/calconvert.cgi> was active at the original writing of this paper. At this time, although you can download the program it can no longer be operated on that website. I can say for a certainty that without this site my work would have been next to impossible. I believe it is no coincidence that I was able to find it when I needed it. Hopefully the program will find a new home. However, at this date a Hebrew calendar is available at <http://www.uwm.edu/~corre/calendar.html>. Other valuable information about the Hebrew Calendar is also available at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1584/index.html>*

The Dates of the Feasts and Fasts are Prophetically Significant

In the events of Christ's life recorded in the Bible there is a discernible pattern. It is that when God ordained a date in the worship scheme of the Tabernacle and the Temple it foreshadowed something in the life of the coming Messiah or Christ. In the course of history, the LORD fulfilled the prophetic shadows of the Tabernacle and Temple with the reality. The days God fulfilled the Messianic shadows with reality were on the days of those feasts. Paul confirmed this pattern of shadows followed by the reality in Colossians:

Colossians 2:16b-17 “---a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. “

Perhaps it was the LORD's way of showing that He sees the end from the beginning.^a This pattern is clearly seen in the correlations of the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits and The Feast of Weeks with their fulfillment in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the starting of the Church on Pentecost as I shall show below by logical argument.

To demonstrate this point, I will prove from scripture several propositions. Those propositions are:

1. The Crucifixion of Jesus was the fulfillment in reality of the shadow of Passover, and Jesus was the true Passover lamb.
2. Jesus was crucified on the day and time of the Passover.
3. The Burial of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
4. Jesus was buried on the day and time of the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
5. The Resurrection of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Feast of Firstfruits.
6. The giving of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church was the fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost.
7. The giving of the Holy Spirit occurred on the day of the Feast of Weeks also called Pentecost.

Concerning Passover

Proposition 1: The Crucifixion of Jesus was the fulfillment in reality of the shadow of Passover, and Jesus was the true Passover lamb.

Proof:

^a *Isaiah 46:10* “I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.”

1 Corinthians 5:7 “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are.^a For **Christ, our Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed.”

Proposition 2: Jesus was crucified on the day and time of the Passover.

Proof:

The Day of Preparation was and is the day which leads up to the moment of Passover at the twilight of the day. On that day all leaven was to be removed from every house. The Passover occurred at twilight on the 14th Nisan.^b From twilight the prior evening to twilight on the 14th was the first day. The 14th was the day of Preparation. This ordinance was set up in the Mosaic Law in the following passage:

Exodus 12:15-19 “For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. **On By the first day remove the yeast from your houses**, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat—that is all you may do. Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, **from the evening of the fourteenth day** until the evening of the twenty-first day. For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And whoever eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel, whether he is an alien or native-born.”

Jesus was crucified on Preparation Day according to every Gospel account as confirmed below:

Matthew 27:59-62 “Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. **The next day, the one after Preparation Day**, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.”

Mark 15:42-43 “**It was Preparation Day** (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body.”

^a *During the Day of Preparation for the Passover, the Jewish house was swept and dusted in every nook and cranny to eliminate every speck of yeast or leaven from the house. This was to assure that the Passover bread was completely pure. Christians, who have truly celebrated the real Passover, by believing in the redemptive power of the cross, have become the truly pure bread in Jesus Christ. Since we are pure, spiritually, it is up to us to live, experientially, as we are positionally.*

^b *Nisan was the first month of the Jewish religious calendar. It starts about the time of the spring equinox.*

Luke 23:52-54 “Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. **It was Preparation Day**, and the Sabbath (*Special Sabbath*) was about to begin.”

John 19:31 “Now **it was the day of Preparation**, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.”

The actual sacrifice was to begin on the 14th at twilight (the word עֶרֶב {eh'·rev} in Exodus 12:6 and Leviticus 23:5 literally means “the darkening” from a primitive root which means to cover with a texture.

Exodus 12:3-6 “Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. If any household is too small for a whole lamb, they must share one with their nearest neighbor, having taken into account the number of people there are. You are to determine the amount of lamb needed in accordance with what each person will eat. The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. Take care of them until the **fourteenth day of the month**, when all the people of the community of Israel must slaughter them at **twilight**.”

Leviticus 23:5 “The LORD’s Passover begins at **twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month**.”

Jesus was put on the cross exactly at twilight (the darkening), because an early “twilight” occurred at 12 noon that day when a premature night darkened the earth.

Matthew 27:45 “From the sixth hour until the ninth hour **darkness** came over all the land.”

Mark 15:33 “At the sixth hour **darkness** came over the whole land until the ninth hour.”

Luke 23:44-45 “It was now about the sixth hour, and **darkness** came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.”

The “sixth hour” was considered the sixth hour since sunrise in those days. It was what we consider noon or 12 o’clock.

Conclusion: The event foreshadowed by the Exodus Passover was fulfilled on that Passover in the 1st Century AD at twilight when Jesus was crucified at the moment of the supernatural twilight of that day.

Concerning the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Proposition 3: The Burial of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Proof:

Jesus made it clear at the Last Supper that bread spoke of His body as is testified in Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-24. Luke also gave the same testimony:

Luke 22:19 “And he took **bread**, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘**This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**’”

Also, the following verses also make clear the symbolical meaning of Jesus’ body as the true unleavened bread.

John 6:31-35 “Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the **bread of God is he who comes down from heaven** and gives life to the world.’ ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘from now on give us this bread.’ Then Jesus declared, ‘**I am the bread of life.**’”

John 6:41-58 “At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, ‘**I am the bread that came down from heaven.**’ They said, ‘Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’ ‘Stop grumbling among yourselves,’ Jesus answered. ‘No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. **I am the living bread that came down from heaven.** If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.’ Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, ‘How can this man give us his flesh to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.’”

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 “Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not **the bread** that we break a participation in **the body of Christ**? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.”

Why did the Bread have to be unleavened? It was because leaven derives from fermentation and spoilage, which was understood to stand for sin and corruption. Nothing with leaven was allowed

in any offering made to the LORD, particularly since those offering represented the life of the coming Messiah.

Leviticus 2:11 “Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in an offering made to the LORD by fire.”

Leviticus 7:12 “If he offers it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering he is to offer cakes of bread made without yeast and mixed with oil, wafers made without yeast and spread with oil, and cakes of fine flour well-kneaded and mixed with oil.”

Leviticus 8:2 “Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering, the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast.”

Numbers 6:14-15 “There he is to present his offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made without yeast--cakes made of fine flour mixed with oil, and wafers spread with oil.”

Because the body and life of Christ had to be without sin, the bread that represented it had to be unleavened.

Hebrews 4:15 “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin.”

1 Peter 1:18-19 “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

It is clear that the true bread of the Festival (Feast of Unleavened Bread) was the sinless body of Christ which was buried to be raised again.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, **let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.**”

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was commemorated by eating unleavened bread (leaven is yeast) and it commenced after the evening of the 14th day of Nisan. That was the very beginning of the 15th day.

Exodus 12:17-18 “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from **the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day.**”

Exodus 23:15 & Exodus 34:18 “Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you.”

Leviticus 23:6-8 “On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread **begins**; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.”

Deuteronomy 16:5-8 “You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the LORD your God gives you except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must **sacrifice the Passover in the evening**, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary of your departure from Egypt. Roast it and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents. For six days eat **unleavened bread** and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the LORD your God and do no work.”

Proposition 4: Jesus was buried on the day and time of the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Proof:

We know from all four Gospels that the body of Jesus was buried just at the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread which began just after twilight on the 14th of Nisan. The following verses demonstrate that the soldiers took Jesus body down as evening or twilight approached. It is obvious that to take Jesus’ body down and prepare it for burial would have carried the time past twilight or into the 15th of Nisan, the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Matthew 27:57-60 “As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. **Joseph took the body**, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and **placed it in his own new tomb** that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.”

Mark 15:42b-46 “So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he

asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. So, Joseph bought some linen cloth, **took down the body**, wrapped it in the linen, and **placed it in a tomb** cut out of rock.”

Luke 23:50-54 “Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body. Then **he took it down**, wrapped it in linen cloth and **placed it in a tomb** cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, **and the Sabbath** (*the Special Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread*) **was about to begin.**”

John 19:31 “Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.”

John 19:38-42 “Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate’s permission, **he came and took the body away**. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and **in the garden a new tomb**, in which no one had ever been laid. Because **it was the Jewish day of Preparation** and since the tomb was nearby, **they laid Jesus there.**”

Conclusion: The event foreshadowed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread set up in the Law of Moses was fulfilled on the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Concerning the Feast of Firstfruits

Proposition5: The Resurrection of Jesus was the fulfillment of the Feast of Firstfruits.

Proof:

The first of the grain that was harvested was to be raised up by the Priest. He lifted the sheaf of grain seeds and waved it before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath. In our week, it is called “Sunday.”

Leviticus 23:6-11 ““On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.’ The LORD said to Moses, ‘Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land, I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave

the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on **the day after the Sabbath.**”

Some confusion can be caused by the term Feast of Firstfruits since it can be confused with the Feast of Weeks which was also at the regular first harvest. The Feast of Firstfruits was first celebrated when the Israelites first entered the land^a at Passover. At that time the manna stopped. The normal first harvest in most of Israel was at the time of the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), but the climate in the Jordan River valley near Jericho was a mini environment. In winter the average temperature is about 70 degrees Fahrenheit, and early crops are the norm. In the time of Christ, the priests had instituted a custom of planting a designated field in this environment as close to Jerusalem as possible for the purpose of an early harvest.^b This field was to be used just for the purpose of providing this sheaf.

The Feast of Firstfruits was clearly meant to speak of the Resurrection of Christ. The waving of the grain is speaking of just that, as He himself clearly indicated and later Paul confirmed. He was raised from the dead on the Feast of Firstfruits because he was the Firstfruits. He was the original seed.

John 12:23-24 “Jesus replied, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.’”

In 1 Corinthians Paul called Him the firstfruits.

1 Corinthians 15:20-23 “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.”

Proposition 5: Jesus was raised on the day of the Feast of the Firstfruits.

Proof:

Jesus was raised on Sunday the day after the weekly Sabbath.

Matthew 28:1-6 “After the Sabbath,^c at dawn on **the first day of the week**, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the

^a **Joshua 5:11** “The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain.”

^b Edersheim, *The Temple – Its Ministry and Services*.

^c The word “Sabbath” as it appears in both the *Textus Receptus* and *Alexandrian Greek Texts* is σαββάτων {sä'b-bä-tōn} which is the genitive plural and actually should be translated from the Greek as “Sabbaths.” This would indicate there were two Sabbaths between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection Sunday.

Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said.”

Mark 16:2-4 “Very early on **the first day of the week**,^a just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.’”

Luke 24:1-3 “On **the first day of the week**, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.”

John 20:1 “Early on **the first day of the week**, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene^b went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.”

Conclusion: The event foreshadowed by the Feast of Firstfruits was fulfilled on the Feast of Firstfruits.

Concerning the Feast of Weeks also called Pentecost^c

Proposition 6: The giving of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church was the fulfillment of the Feast of Pentecost.

Proof:

The Feast of Weeks was at Pentecost and Pentecost was a second feast of firstfruits.

Exodus 34:22 “Celebrate **the Feast of Weeks** with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.”

Leviticus 23:15-17 “From the day after the Sabbath (*the Feast of Firstfruits*), the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering,^d count off seven full weeks. Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath (*a Sunday*), and then present an offering of new grain to the

^aThe term “first day of the week” always applies to the day after the weekly Sabbath as the weekly Sabbath is the seventh day of the week.

^b Although John only records the visit of Mary Magdalene, her statement to John and Peter in verse 2 “we know not” implies the presence of the other women.

^c Called Pentecost because it was fifty days after the regular sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The word “Pentecost” is the Greek word meaning “fiftieth.”

^d See my comments on the wave offering at the Feast of Firstfruits on page 9.

LORD. From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour, baked with yeast,^a as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD.

Numbers 28:26 ““On the day of firstfruits, when you present to the LORD an offering of new grain during the Feast of Weeks, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

Deuteronomy 16:10-11 “Then celebrate the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name--you, your sons and daughters, your menservants and maidservants, the Levites in your towns, and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows living among you.”

The New Testament spoke of the Church as being another kind of firstfruits, the firstfruits of the Spirit.

Acts 1:3-5 “After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’”

Romans 8:23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

James 1:18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Proposition 7: The giving of the Holy Spirit occurred on the day of the Feast of Weeks / Pentecost.

Proof:

Acts 2:1-4 “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

Conclusion: The event foreshadowed by the Feast of Weeks was fulfilled on the Feast of Weeks.

^a This is one of two places where bread made with yeast was offered. The other place was in Leviticus 7:13. These seem to be related to fellowship offerings.

This section has conclusively demonstrated that at least some special days celebrated according to the Old Testament ordinances foreshadowed and prophesied events that later occurred exactly on those same special days.

The pattern that God set up in history is admirably explained by Alfred Edersheim in his book The Temple Its Ministry and Services, Chapter 11:

“When God bound up the future of all nations in the history of Abraham and his seed (Gen 12:3), He made that history prophetic; and each event and every rite became, as it were, a bud, destined to open in blossom and ripen into fruit on that tree under the shadow of which all nations were to be gathered.”

This Chronology of Christ will demonstrate that besides the foreshadowing by the Festivals discussed above there were also other Festivals or special days which also foreshadowed events which would happen later.

Josephus must be understood as a Christian as well as a Jew.

This is the second subject which needs to be understood to comprehend a correct chronology of the life of Christ. First you should know who Josephus was. His full Latin name was Flavius Josephus. He was born in Jerusalem about 37 AD. He was a member of the priestly line of Aaron and of the last Royal family of the Jews, the Hasmoneans. He was also a Pharisee. He was the author of the only contemporary account of Jewish history in the 1st Century BC and 1st Century AD. He was an eyewitness and major participant in the events surrounding the Jewish revolt of 66-70 AD. He served as the commander of the Jewish resistance against the Romans in Galilee although only 30 years old. After about a year of heroic resistance, he was defeated and captured. He witnessed the rest of the war on the Roman side first as a prisoner, and then as a guest of the Commanding General of the Romans. He was later adopted into the family of the two Roman Generals that defeated him. They were the father and son, Flavius Vespasian and Flavius Titus, who went on to become the first two Roman Emperors of the Flavian dynasty. He wrote two great histories. The first was Wars of the Jews (covering the Jewish revolt and its causes) which he wrote about 74 AD. Later he wrote Antiquities of the Jews covering the entire history of the Jewish people from Jacob to the beginning of the Jewish revolt. He wrote that in about 90 AD. After I had studied Josephus, it became clear to me, both from my own observations and the notes of his 18th century English translator, William Whiston, that in the 16 years between his writing Wars of the Jews, and his writing of Antiquities of the Jews a great change had been wrought in his attitude toward the Pharisees and Priests of the Jews, and his attitude toward the Christians. In the first book his praise of the Sanhedrin and High Priests was almost excessive.^a In the second book, he described them as treacherous and greedy. In the first book, Christ and the Christians are not even mentioned. In the second, Josephus made a point of mentioning Jesus, John the Baptist, and James. Twice he calls Jesus – “the Christ.” This was in spite of the fact that when he wrote this second book Christianity was being severely persecuted by the last of the Flavians, Domitian the brother and son of Titus and Vespasian. It is clear to me that in the interim between the books Wars and Antiquities, Josephus became a Christian. The passages in Antiquities where he mentions Christ and the Church are copied below.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 18, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3. “Now there was about this time **Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure.** He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. **He was [the] Christ.** And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for **he appeared to them alive again the third day; as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him.** And the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.”

^a This was written at a time after the defeat of the Jews and when his hosts partly blamed the High Priests and Sanhedrin for the revolt so his attitude couldn't be attributed to currying favor with those who could help him.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 18, Chapter 5, Paragraph 2. “Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against **John, that was called the Baptist**: for Herod slew him, **who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness.** Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him.”

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 20, Chapter 9, Paragraph 1. “AND now Caesar, upon hearing the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judea, as procurator. But the king deprived Joseph of the high priesthood and bestowed the succession to that dignity on the son of Ananus, who was also himself called Ananus. Now the report goes that this eldest Ananus proved a most fortunate man; for he had five sons who had all performed the office of a high priest to God, and who had himself enjoyed that dignity a long time formerly, which had never happened to any other of our high priests. But this younger Ananus, who, as we have told you already, took the high priesthood, was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent; he was also of the sect of the Sadducees, who are very rigid in judging offenders, above all the rest of the Jews, as we have already observed; when, therefore, Ananus was of this disposition, he thought he had now a proper opportunity [to exercise his authority]. Festus was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so **he assembled the Sanhedrin of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or, some of his companions]; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned: but as for those who seemed the most equitable of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at the breach of the laws, they disliked what was done; they also sent to the king [Agrippa], desiring him to send to Ananus that he should act so no more, for that what he had already done was not to be justified; nay, some of them went also to meet Albinus, as he was upon his journey from Alexandria, and informed him that it was not lawful for Ananus to assemble a Sanhedrin without his consent. Whereupon Albinus complied with what they said, and wrote in anger to Ananus, and threatened that he would bring him to punishment for what he had done; on which king Agrippa took the high priesthood from him, when he had ruled but three months, and made Jesus, the son of Damneus, high priest.”**

Besides these passages, there are Josephus' assertions that prophetic passages in the Old Testament concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled by the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. In particular look at the following:

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 10, Chapter 11 Paragraph 7b “In the very same manner **Daniel also wrote concerning the Roman government, and that our country should be made desolate by them.** All these things did this man leave in writing, as God had showed them to him, insomuch that such as read his prophecies, and see how they have been fulfilled, would wonder at the honor wherewith God honored Daniel; and may thence discover how the Epicureans are in an error, who cast Providence out of human life, and do not believe that God takes care of the affairs of the world, nor that the universe is governed and continued in being by that blessed and immortal nature, but say that the world is carried along of its own accord, without a ruler and a curator; which, were it destitute of a guide to conduct it, as they imagine, it would be like ships without pilots, which we see drowned by the winds, or like chariots without drivers, which are overturned; so would the world be dashed to pieces by its being carried without a Providence, and so perish, and come to naught. So that, by the forementioned predictions of Daniel, those men seem to me very much to err from the truth, who determine that God exercises no providence over human affairs; for if that were the case, that the world went on by mechanical necessity, we should not see that all things would come to pass according to his prophecy. Now as to myself, I have so described these matters as I have found them and read them; but if any one is inclined to another opinion about them, let him enjoy his different sentiments without any blame from me.”

The only passage he could be referring to is the following:

Daniel 9:22-27 “He instructed me and said to me, ‘Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. As soon as you began to pray, an answer was given, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the message and understand the vision: Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. **After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One (*Christ*) will be cut off and will have nothing. The people (*Romans*) of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.** The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.”

The logical conclusion is that Josephus believed that the “Anointed One” had come. Who could he believe was the “Anointed One” but Jesus Christ? Josephus also makes a similar observation about passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 10, Chapter 5 Paragraph 1b “Jeremiah the prophet composed an elegy to lament him, which is extant till this time also. Moreover, this prophet denounced beforehand the sad calamities that were coming upon the city. **He also left behind him in writing a description of that destruction of our nation which has lately happened in our days**, and the taking of Babylon; nor was he the only prophet who delivered such predictions beforehand to the multitude, but so did **Ezekiel also**, who was the first person that wrote, and **left behind him in writing two books concerning these events.**”

I believe the two passages he is speaking about are the following from Jeremiah’s Lamentation and Ezekiel.

Lamentation 4:11-20 “The LORD has given full vent to his wrath; he has poured out his fierce anger. **He kindled a fire in Zion that consumed her foundations.** The kings of the earth did not believe, nor did any of the world’s people, that enemies and foes could enter the gates of Jerusalem. But it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests, who shed within her the blood of the righteous. ----- When they flee and wander about, people among the nations say, “They can stay here no longer.” The LORD himself has scattered them; he no longer watches over them. The priests are shown no honor, the elders no favor. Moreover, our eyes failed, looking in vain for help; from our towers we watched for a nation that could not save us. Men stalked us at every step, so we could not walk in our streets. Our end was near, our days were numbered, for our end had come. **Our pursuers were swifter than eagles** (*my note - the eagle was the symbol of Rome*) **in the sky**; they chased us over the mountains and lay in wait for us in the desert. **The LORD’s anointed** (*Jesus*), **our very life breath, was caught in their traps.**^a **We thought that under his shadow we would live among the nations.**”^b

Ezekiel 4:1-7 “Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. “Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So, for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. **“After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year.**^c **Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her.**”

^a *Psalms 32:4-5*

^b *Isaiah 32:1-2, Hosea 14:7*

^c *Note that in this passage two sieges are talked about, not one. One siege was the result of the “sins of Israel” (the united kingdoms of both north and south). The second siege was a result of the sins of Judah (those who returned after the first siege and exile. It cannot be a coincidence that 40 years to the day after the Jews (Judah) crucified Jesus Christ on Passover, the Romans*

Both passages also implied that the coming of the Messiah would come before the Roman siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

You might ask yourself: “If Josephus was a believer, why didn’t he speak more clearly or in greater length?” The answer is easy. He wrote and published Antiquities about the time the Emperor Domitian, the son and brother of his erstwhile patrons Vespasian and Titus, was embarking on the first really severe persecution of Christians. Many prominent Roman citizens who had become Christians were exiled, imprisoned or executed. According to tradition it was at this time that the Apostle John was exiled to the island of Patmos after they had first tried unsuccessfully to kill him by boiling him in oil. Josephus was just a historian ^a who was a fairly new Christian. His testimony about Jesus being “the Christ,” quoted above, is tucked in quietly into his history just before he embarks on an uncharacteristic narration of a Roman sex scandal, which has little to do with his history. To me, it seems clear that he decided that, though it was dangerous, he felt it was important for him to put in a small quiet testimony of his faith. However, he followed it by some purely Roman gossip that was so juicy that no Roman looking for victims would be likely to remember the previous passage. He also included in Antiquities the only historical accounts of John the Baptist and the death of James the Just, the brother of the Lord and leader of the church in Jerusalem. We already quoted those passages on pages 14 and 15.

Why is this important to the Chronology of Christ? Because, when I found Josephus’ comments in Antiquities about events in the Temple during the days close to the birth of Christ, I concluded that he had quietly recorded some things that could be important to Christian history. I concluded that he had recorded some things there which were important regarding the birth of Christ!

raised the second siege on Jerusalem which resulted in a second destruction of the city and Temple.

^a I find Josephus’ interpretation of Jewish history gets less perfect the farther he gets from his own time, but that is true of all historians.

The Jewish Calendar

The third subject which needs to be understood to comprehend a correct chronology of the life of Christ is the Jewish Calendar. There is a pretty clear indication from both the Bible and secular sources that when God restored the world in Genesis, He had instituted a perfect chronological system. In that system the earth circled the Sun every 360 days, and there was a New Moon every 30 days.^a There were exactly twelve months to a year. Every month was exactly one synodic cycle of the moon. According to Scripture this timetable was in effect at the time of Noah's flood. That is shown by a logical examination of the following verses from Genesis:

Genesis 7:11 "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month--on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened."

Genesis 7:24 "The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days."

Genesis 8:1 "But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded."

Genesis 8:4 "and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat."

These verses tell us that from "the seventeenth day of the second month" to "the seventeenth day of the seventh month" was a period of 150 days. The text seems to indicate that the day the ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat was the day the flood was counted to have ceased. It could be argued that that the ark came to rest only after the flood waters started to recede, but that would have meant that the period of five lunar months was longer than 150 days. The present lunar cycles would make five lunar months equal to 147½ days. At the very least we must admit that the lunar cycles have changed since the Flood. I think that logic and math make us to conclude that at that time five months was 150 days. That means that at the time of the Flood one year equaled 12 months of 30-day months for a total of 360 days.

1 Kings 4:7 indicates that at the time of Solomon a year was made up of exactly 12 months:

1 Kings 4:7 "Solomon also had twelve district governors over all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king and the royal household. Each one had to provide supplies for one month in the year.

1 Chronicles 27:1-15 described how in the time of King David there were twelve different divisions of 24,000 men who served for one month apiece. Both of these passages are indications

^a From New Moon to New Moon is called a "synodic cycle" of the moon. This is currently exactly 29.530587981 days. A synodic period relates to an object's position relative to the sun. So, the cycle which goes from full moon to full moon is a synodic cycle. A sidereal period is sometimes called a 'star day'. It relates to an object's position relative to the distant stars. The Moon's sidereal orbital period (the sidereal month) is 27.3 days; this is the time interval that the Moon takes to orbit 360° around the Earth relative to the "fixed" stars. The period of the lunar phases (the synodic month), e.g. the full moon to full moon period, is longer at 29.5 days.

that there were at that time an even 12 months to a year and there was no need to provide for the intercalated 13th month ^a which added during the later Jewish Calendar. We also know that each month ^b began with the new moon, and the times of the Feasts of First Fruits, Pentecost, and Tabernacles were timed to coincide with the harvest season. If the kind of solar and lunar timetable we have now had been in effect, a lunar calendar with twelve months a year would have lost 9½ days a year to the seasons. If a 365¼ day year had been in effect in Moses time, after 20 years, the harvest Feast of Ingathering would be celebrated in the dead of winter. God is not stupid!

We know from secular history that, at least back to the 8th Century BC, the Babylonians recorded the months as being 29½ days, and yet from even more ancient Babylonian astronomers we inherited the 360-degree circle which they invented to track the annual rotation of the stars. The renowned scientist, Sir Isaac Newton ^c was convinced that this was based on the fact that they had observed the complete cycle of the stars in their day to be 360 days. In other words, each degree stood for one day. Some time, possibly at the time of Hezekiah's prayer ^d (circa 700 BC), the cycle of the earth around the sun was altered from the ancient 360 days to the current 365¼ days, and the cycle of the moon around the earth was altered from the ancient 30 days to current 29½ days. I have read a paper by a Christian who was a scientist which testified that according to the laws of physics a decrease of the speed of orbit of the earth around the sun from 360 days to 365¼ days would be naturally followed by an increase of the speed of the orbit of the moon around the earth from 30 days to 29½ days.

This is all very interesting and testifies to the accuracy of the Biblical account of ancient times, but what does it have to do with our study? It is simply this: after this change in the heavens the Jews adjusted their calendar. They were not stupid. They knew, along with the rest of the ancient world, that there had been a change.^e They changed to a calendar which added a thirteenth month as needed.^f The schedule of when they added a thirteenth month to keep the distortion at a

^a *Intercalation in timekeeping is the insertion of a leap day, week, or month into some calendar years to make the calendar follow the seasons or moon phases.*

^b *It hardly seems necessary to point out that the word "month" is literally "moonth" or "cycle of the moon."*

^c *Isaac Newton was also a dedicated Christian.*

^d **Isaiah 38:7-8** "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.' So, the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down." **Also see 2 Kings 20:11**

^e *The story of how the Babylonians came to Hezekiah's court because they had heard that the reason lay in Israel is instructive and provocative (Isaiah 39).*

^f *One of the great contributions of Julius Caesar was the Julian Calendar. That calendar kept 12 months in a year but abandoned the lunar cycle as the basis for the length of the month. Our modern western calendar follows basically the same pattern that Julius Caesar instituted in 45 BC, although it was slightly modified by Pope Gregory in 1582. The Julian Calendar substituted for a Roman Calendar which had intercalary months like the Jewish calendar, but those months had to be decreed by the Pontifex Maximus. By Julius Caesar's time there had been too many*

minimum was dictated by mathematics, not by whim. The decree was issued annually, as a matter of form, from Jerusalem or Palestine until the 4th Century AD when the Christianized Roman Government started interfering with the issuance of the decree in order to help destroy the influence of Palestine and to fragment Judaism. Consequently, at that time the Jewish authorities issued a table which could be followed from year to year indefinitely without direct instruction from Palestine.^a The Jews still follow that schedule and it was certainly that same table which was in force in the time of Jesus. When the Roman Church went back to establish a schedule for celebrating Easter apart from the Jewish Calendar, they nonetheless obviously relied on the Jewish schedule to discover the Julian date for the first Easter.^b

However, those in the modern church who are aware of this calendar seem to have ignored it, but most are just unaware of it. That is sad, because the use of it helps bring all the dates of the Bible into harmony with the rest of the Bible and with history.

It will be useful for you to know something of the Jewish calendar, both from standpoint of its Biblical origins, and the way it worked. To begin with, as per the scripture, the first day of every month was the new moon.

stretches when the intercalary months had been omitted. Since at the time he made the change, Julius Caesar filled both the post of Pontifex Maximus and head of state, he had the authority to decree an entirely new calendar system.

When the Gregorian Calendar was adopted, ten days were added to the calendar to correct for slippage over 16 centuries. To prevent this slippage in the future an additional rule was instituted. Every several centuries a normal leap year is treated as a normal year by the following rule:

If the year can be evenly divided by 100, it is NOT a leap year, unless the year is also evenly divisible by 400. Then it is a leap year. This means that in the Gregorian calendar, the years 2000 and 2400 are leap years, while 1800, 1900, 2100, 2200, 2300 and 2500 are NOT leap years.

^a *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People, Edited by Eli Barnavy 1992, Schocken Books, New York, page 68 – “Meanwhile, conciliar decisions and Roman legal codes – first those of Theodosius, then of Justinian – redefined the legal and social status of the Jews. To neutralize the influence which Judaism still exercised on the religious life of eastern Christian communities, the Byzantine rulers issued prohibitions on marriage, commercial exchange, and social relations between Jews and Christians. The Council of Nicaea (325), for example, decided to fix a constant date for Easter, a holiday which until then had been celebrated in the Orient on the same day as the Jewish Passover. While the bishops released their faithful from dependence on the Jewish proclamation of the festival, civil authorities intercepted Jewish emissaries who were dispatched from Palestine to inform the diaspora communities of the order of the calendar. These circumstances were probably the cause for the decision taken by the patriarch Hillel II in 359 to proclaim a permanent calendar calculated mathematically once and for all.”*

^b *They picked the closest possible year during which Passover fell on Friday, 33 AD. This original error magnified the chronology problems a hundred-fold.*

Numbers 28:11-14 “**On the first of every month**, present to the LORD a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; and with each lamb, a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil. This is for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin of wine; with the ram, a third of a hin; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. **This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at each new moon during the year.**”

These New Moon Festivals on the first of each month were one of the three types of Jewish observances which were held to be most important along with the seventh day Sabbath and the three annual Feasts. The New Moon was only supposed to be celebrated on the day after the night the New Moon was spotted, but of course the priests in Jerusalem knew when it was to be expected from repeated measurement of the lunar cycle. Even so, great pains were taken to ensure actual observation, even to the setting of observation posts out in the generally cloudless southern desert in case visibility was limited. Sightings were relayed very quickly by means of signal fires on mountain tops. In the rare instance when a sighting was not made on the night it might have been expected, the New Moon Festival was observed the next day regardless of whether it could be seen or not. With the New Moon, the month started, and the schedule of Feasts and Holidays were ordered accordingly. Usually six months had 29 days and six had 30, but some years could have it split up seven and five.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Tabernacles were celebrated on the full moon, the 15th of the month (Leviticus 23:6, Leviticus 23:33). These were two of the three original major feasts instituted by the Law of Moses. Later in the 5th century BC, the Feast of Esther (Purim) also was instituted on that date.

The current Jewish Calendar, which was made necessary by the change to the 365¼ day solar cycle, kept the dates as close to the solar seasons as possible by the following device. On a fixed schedule an additional month was added about every three years. This schedule was repeated every nineteen years. On those years when an additional month, or intercalated month, was added, the month was added after the month of Adar, which on the religious calendar was the twelfth month. It was then called Adar 2. Since the months start to lose ground to the Sun at the rate of about 9½ days a year, a little more than every third year, an extra month is added to bring the lunar calendar back to being a little ahead of the Solar seasons. As I said, when these months are added is dictated by a 19-year table, which in turn is dictated by mathematical and astronomical constants.

Several years ago, when I was looking for something else, I stumbled on a site on the internet which calculated any date into its counterpart in the Julian calendar, Gregorian calendar, Old French calendar, Julian day number, and Jewish calendar. Importantly, besides that, it gave the day of the week. This discovery not only stimulated a lot of study on my part about the Jewish calendar and its calculation and origins, but it allowed me to make calculations which were

invaluable in this study. I have noted the website in my footnotes. I do not believe it is accessible on the internet at this time but can be downloaded and run on your own computer. I have found others which are available at the current time and I have noted them further on in this study. Just use any search engine with the query “Jewish Calendar” and I am sure you can find others.

Background of the Dates of Birth, Circumcision, and Dedication

In the life of Christ, there are two certain dates and one certain age around which all the calculations are constructed. The first date is the date of the eclipse, noted by Josephus, which occurred shortly before Herod died. The second date is the year in which “the word of God” came to John the Baptist in the wilderness. That date marked the age of Jesus Christ at the time of His baptism which is recorded as “about thirty.” We know from Josephus and the science of astronomy that the eclipse occurred in Jerusalem at 1:12 AM on March 13, 4 BC. We know the year that “the word of God came to John the Baptist in the wilderness” was 26 BC because we know from Roman records that year marked “fifteenth year” since Tiberius had assumed the co-regency with Augustus. We also know from Luke that the age of Jesus Christ was “nearly thirty” at the time of His baptism. These three markers of the time will all come up again.

I first began to reinvestigate my old questions about the Chronology of the life of Christ about twenty-five years ago when I was re-reading Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews. Fortunately, at that time, I had become aware that Josephus had been a Christian at the time he wrote Antiquities. I had read the following passage in Josephus which described the time just before Herod’s death in 4 BC.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 6, Paragraph 2-4. “There was one Judas, the son of Saripheus, and Matthias, the son of Margalothus, two of the most eloquent men among the Jews, and the most celebrated interpreters of the Jewish laws, and men well beloved by the people, because of their education of their youth; for all those that were studious of virtue frequented their lectures every day. **These men, when they found that the king's distemper was incurable, excited the young men that they would pull down all those works which the king had erected contrary to the law of their fathers,** and thereby obtain the rewards which the law will confer on them for such actions of piety; for that it was truly on account of Herod's rashness in making such things as the law had forbidden, that his other misfortunes, and this distemper also, which was so unusual among mankind, and with which he was now afflicted, came upon him; for Herod had caused such things to be made which were contrary to the law, of which he was accused by Judas and Matthias; **for the king had erected over the great gate of the temple a large golden eagle, of great value, and had dedicated it to the temple. Now the law forbids those that propose to live according to it, to erect images or representations of any living creature. So these wise men persuaded [their scholars] to pull down the golden eagle;** alleging, that although they should incur any danger, which might bring them to their deaths, the virtue of the action now proposed to them would appear much more advantageous to them than the pleasures of life; since they would die for the preservation and observation of the law of their fathers; since they would also acquire an everlasting fame and commendation; since they would be both commended by the present generation, and leave an example of life that would never be forgotten to posterity; since that common calamity of dying cannot be avoided by our living so as to escape any such dangers; that therefore it is a right thing for those who are in love with a virtuous conduct, to wait for that fatal hour by such behavior as may carry them out of the world with praise and honor; and that this will alleviate death to a great degree, thus to come at it by the performance of brave actions, which bring us into danger

of it; and at the same time to leave that reputation behind them to their children, and to all their relations, whether they be men or women, which will be of great advantage to them afterward.”

“And with such discourses as this did these men excite the young men to this action; and a report being come to them that the king was dead, this was an addition to the wise men's persuasions; so, **in the very middle of the day, they got upon the place, they pulled down the eagle, and cut it into pieces with axes, while a great number of the people were in the temple.** And now the king's captain, upon hearing what the undertaking was, and supposing it was a thing of a higher nature than it proved to be, came up thither, having a great band of soldiers with him, such as was sufficient to put a stop to the multitude of those who pulled down what was dedicated to God; so he fell upon them unexpectedly, and as they were upon this bold attempt, in a foolish presumption rather than a cautious circumspection, as is usual with the multitude, and while they were in disorder, and incautious of what was for their advantage; so he caught no fewer than forty of the young men, who had the courage to stay behind when the rest ran away, together with the authors of this bold attempt, Judas and Matthias, who thought it an ignominious thing to retire upon his approach, and led them to the king. And when they were come to the king, and he asked them if they had been so bold as to pull down what he had dedicated to God, “Yes, (said they,) what was contrived we contrived, and what hath been performed we performed it, and that with such a virtuous courage as becomes men; for we have given our assistance to those things which were dedicated to the majesty of God, and we have provided for what we have learned by hearing the law; and it ought not to be wondered at, if we esteem those laws which Moses had suggested to him, and were taught him by God, and which he wrote and left behind him, more worthy of observation than thy commands. Accordingly, we will undergo death, and all sorts of punishments which thou canst inflict upon us, with pleasure, since we are conscious to ourselves that we shall die, not for any unrighteous actions, but for our love to religion.” And thus they all said, and their courage was still equal to their profession, and equal to that with which they readily set about this undertaking. And when the king had ordered them to be bound, he sent them to Jericho, and called together the principal men among the Jews; and when they were come, he made them assemble in the theater, and because he could not himself stand, he lay upon a couch, and enumerated the many labors that he had long endured on their account, and his building of the temple, and what a vast charge that was to him; while the Asamoneans, during the hundred and twenty-five years of their government, had not been able to perform any so great a work for the honor of God as that was; that he had also adorned it with very valuable donations, on which account he hoped that he had left himself a memorial, and procured himself a reputation after his death. He then cried out, that these men had not abstained from affronting him, even in his lifetime, but that in the very day time, and in the sight of the multitude, they had abused him to that degree, as to fall upon what he had dedicated, and in that way of abuse had pulled it down to the ground. They pretended, indeed, that they did it to affront him; but if any one consider the thing truly, they will find that they were guilty of sacrilege against God therein.”

“But the people, on account of Herod's barbarous temper, and for fear he should be so cruel and to inflict punishment on them, said what was done was done without their approbation, and that it seemed to them that the actors might well be punished for what they had done. But as for Herod, he dealt more mildly with others [of the assembly] but he deprived Matthias of the high priesthood, as in part an occasion of this action, and made Joazar, who was Matthias's wife's

brother, high priest in his stead. **Now it happened, that during the time of the high priesthood of this Matthias, there was another person made high priest for a single day, that very day which the Jews observed as a fast. The occasion was this: This Matthias the high priest, on the night before that day when the fast was to be celebrated, seemed, in a dream, to have conversation with his wife; and because he could not officiate himself on that account, Joseph, the son of Ellemus, his kinsman, assisted him in that sacred office. But Herod deprived this Matthias of the high priesthood, and burnt the other Matthias, who had raised the sedition, with his companions, alive. And that very night there was an eclipse of the moon.**^a”

There is a less complete account of the events given in Josephus’ Wars of the Jews written about twenty years earlier before he had become a Christian:

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book I, Chapter 33, Paragraph 1-4.

NOW Herod's distemper became more and more severe to him, and this because these his disorders fell upon him in his old age, and when he was in a melancholy condition; for he was already seventy years of age, and had been brought by the calamities that happened to him about his children, whereby he had no pleasure in life, even when he was in health; the grief also that Antipater was still alive aggravated his disease, whom he resolved to put to death now not at random, but as soon as he should be well again, and resolved to have him slain [in a public manner].

There also now happened to him, among his other calamities, a certain popular sedition. There were two men of learning in the city [Jerusalem,] who were thought the most skillful in the laws of their country, and were on that account had in very great esteem all over the nation; they were, the one Judas, the son of Sepphoris, and the other Matthias, the son of Margalus. There was a great concourse of the young men to these men when they expounded the laws, and there got together every day a kind of an army of such as were growing up to be men. Now when these men were informed that the king was wearing away with melancholy, and with a distemper, they dropped words to their acquaintance, how it was now a very proper time to defend the cause of God, and to pull down what had been erected contrary to the laws of their country; for it was unlawful there should be any such thing in the temple as images, or faces, or the like representation of any animal whatsoever. **Now the king had put up a golden eagle over the great gate of the temple, which these learned men exhorted them to cut down;** and told them, that if there should any danger arise, it was a glorious thing to die for the laws of their country; because that the soul was immortal, and that an eternal enjoyment of happiness did await such as died on that account; while the mean-spirited, and those that were not wise enough to show a

^a Footnote of Whiston translation of 1737 “This eclipse of the moon (which is the only eclipse of either of the luminaries mentioned by our Josephus in any of his writings) is of the greatest consequence for the determination of the time for the death of Herod and Antipater, and for the birth and entire chronology of Jesus Christ. It happened March 13th, in the year of the Julian period 4710, and the 4th year before the Christian era. See its calculation by the rules of astronomy, at the end of the *Astronomical Lectures*, edit. Lat. p. 451, 452.”

right love of their souls, preferred a death by a disease, before that which is the result of a virtuous behavior.

At the same time that these men made this speech to their disciples, a rumor was spread abroad that the king was dying, which made the young men set about the work with greater boldness; they therefore let themselves down from the top of the temple with thick cords, and this at midday, and while a great number of people were in the temple, and cut down that golden eagle with axes. This was presently told to the king's captain of the temple, who came running with a great body of soldiers, and caught about forty of the young men, and brought them to the king. And when he asked them, first of all, whether they had been so hardy as to cut down the golden eagle, they confessed they had done so; and when he asked them by whose command they had done it, they replied, at the command of the law of their country; and when he further asked them how they could be so joyful when they were to be put to death, they replied, because they should enjoy greater happiness after they were dead.

At this the king was in such an extravagant passion, that he overcame his disease [for the time,] and went out, and spake to the people; wherein he made a terrible accusation against those men, as being guilty of sacrilege, and as making greater attempts under pretense of their law, and he thought they deserved to be punished as impious persons. Whereupon the people were afraid lest a great number should be found guilty and desired that when he had first punished those that put them upon this work, and then those that were caught in it, he would leave off his anger as to the rest. With this the king complied, though not without difficulty, and ordered those that had let themselves down, together with their Rabbins, to be burnt alive, but delivered the rest that were caught to the proper officers, to be put to death by them.

Let me summarize the important events, which I have emphasized by printing them out in bold font above:

Herod had put a golden eagle over the gateway of the Temple. Seeing that Herod was near to death, a band of young Jewish men determined to tear down what they considered was a blasphemous idol. At a time that the Temple was crowded with people they did just that. About the same time a High Priest named Joseph was appointed for one day, during a fast. Within a few days, the young men were burned at the stake, and the same night there was a full eclipse of the moon.

I also knew from the fact that Jesus was “nearly thirty” at the time of His Baptism during the second year of Tiberius’ reign that the events the Josephus described had occurred within the six months during which Jesus must have been born. When I first read this, I couldn’t help but ask myself a number of questions. Were these events at the Temple related to **the Great Event** which was taking place about that time? Was the substitution, for one day, of a High Priest who was not one of Herod’s political creatures, arranged by God for some purpose related to Jesus’ birth? Was the tearing down of the Golden Eagle over the Temple similarly related? Did the Father allow his Son to be dedicated in a Temple presided over by an unbeliever? Would the

Father have allowed His Son to be dedicated in a Temple which was decorated with the sign of the patron God of the Romans?

They were all provocative questions.

Some time later, I was reading something that remarked that all the main Jewish feasts were on the full moon, and I remembered that all eclipses of the moon also only occurred on a full moon. Then I remembered the eclipse in the Josephus passage above. Over a course of about six months, I stumbled upon modern astronomical charts and the Jewish calendar confirmed that the date of the eclipse of the moon was on the night after the Feast of Esther (Purim). By reading the Josephus' text, I could infer that the date the eagle was torn down was two days before the eclipse. I could infer this because it seems to have taken about two days to round up the culprits, interrogate, try and execute them. The tearing down of the golden eagle thus would have occurred during **the Fast** of Esther which preceded the Feast by one day. We can infer why the conspirators chose that day. The Fast and the Feast of Esther memorialized the ancient day which is recorded in the Book of Esther. That ancient day was when Mordecai and Esther delivered the Jews from their enemies. What better day could they have picked to celebrate the expected deliverance from Herod and the hated influence of Rome by tearing down the golden eagle?

It then occurred to me that the fast that Josephus referred to in the account of the replacement High Priest must also have been the Fast of Esther. We know that Matthias was High Priest at that time and the only other formal Jewish Fast during the High Priesthood of Matthias was at the very beginning. If it had occurred during that time Josephus probably would have mentioned it in Chapter 4 when Matthias was appointed instead of waiting till Chapter 6. My estimate for the length of the priesthood of Matthias is based on the following facts. According to Josephus' account it appears that Matthias was appointed High Priest no more than a month before Herod's son Antipater got back from Rome. Antipater was tried immediately and sentenced to die. At that time Herod sent messengers to the Emperor in Rome to get permission to carry out his sentence. These messengers would have had no other duty than to get to Rome and back as soon as possible. They returned at least a week after Purim in 4 BC, but no later than 14 days before Passover in 4 BC. According to Gibbon, you could sail from Rome to Alexandria in favorable winds in nine to ten days.^a The winds generally were favorable in one direction depending on the time of the year. However, Gibbon records that if one went by Roman road on Imperial business you could make 100 miles a day easily.^b If the messengers went by land except for crossing the

^a *History Of The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, Esq. Vol. 1 "From this port (Ostia), which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favorable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten, to Alexandria in Egypt."

^b *History of the Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon, Esq. Vol. 1 "Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; out their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest

straights at the mouth of the Adriatic, the distance could not have been more than 3000 miles. Thus, both legs could have been done in 30 days. If we allow 20 extra days for contingencies the messengers could have left as late as 43 days before Purim. Matthias was probably appointed High Priest not later than a month before the date of their departure from Jerusalem, and maybe as much as two months before then. The messengers arrived no more than four weeks before Passover that year and no less than two, since we know that there was at least one day from their arrival to the death of Antipater and at least five days after that to the death of Herod.^a After that there was at least seven days of mourning from the death of Herod to Passover.^b We thus can conclude that the High Priesthood of Matthias covered no more than two of the established Fasts of the Jews, the Fast of Esther and the Fast of 10th Tevet about two months before. It seems most likely, given the context that the Fast of Esther is indicated.

If we accept that the date of the substitute High Priest was the Fast of Esther, and the date of the golden eagle being torn down was the same day, what does that tell us? It tells us nothing unless we make an assumption that the events were related to the Advent of Christ. On what day would those events have been the most significant? It is clear to me that day would have been the day Jesus Christ himself was to have come through the gate which was previously decorated with the golden eagle. He would have come to be dedicated under the auspices of a man who was the High Priest for one day and had been chosen by God for that purpose. If we know that day, we not only know the day of his dedication, but also the day of his birth. So, what difference does that make? If the days are not significant the correct calendar adds nothing to the story of the birth of Christ. The wonderful thing is the dates are very significant. I didn't manipulate the facts to make the dates come out on significant days, and yet they did. That is a major reason why I am convinced the dates are right. You can draw your own conclusions.

intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish, throughout their extensive dominions, the regular institution of posts. Houses were everywhere erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of these relays, it was easy to travel a hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads.

^a ***Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 1, Chapter 33, Verse 8.*** “So, Herod, having survived the slaughter of his son five days, died,

^b ***Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 2, Chapter 1, Verse 2*** “Now the necessity which Archelaus was under of taking a journey to Rome was the occasion of new disturbances; for when he had mourned for his father seven days, ---”

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 2, Chapter 1, Verse 2. “--- And indeed, at the feast of unleavened bread, which was now at hand, and is by the Jews called the Passover,”

Birth of Jesus Christ **Roman (Julian Calendar) 31 January, 4 BC, 3 Adar**

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number:^a 1719993, Day of week: Tuesday, Gregorian calendar: 29 January 4 BC (modern civil calendar), Julian calendar: 31 January 4 BC (old civil calendar), Jewish calendar: 3 Adar I 3757 (3757/6/3)^b

The Birth Year

The Birth Year of Jesus Christ is a subject of much disagreement by scholars. In the 6th Century it was popularly supposed that Jesus was born in 1 AD. Some have even proposed that he was

^a *The Julian Day Number (JDN) is the integer assigned to a whole solar day in the Julian day count starting from noon Universal time, with Julian day number 0 assigned to the day starting at noon on January 1, 4713 BC, proleptic Julian calendar (November 24, 4714 BC, in the proleptic Gregorian calendar),[1][2][3] a date at which three multi-year cycles started (which are: Indiction, Solar, and Lunar cycles) and which preceded any dates in recorded history.*
Wikipedia

^b All dates were derived from the following internet web site

<http://www.genealogy.org/~scottlee/calconvert.cgi>

The following note by the author of the website may be useful in evaluating the dates

Valid Range

Although this software can handle dates all the way back to the year 1 (3761 B.C.), such use may not be meaningful. The Jewish calendar has been in use for several thousand years, but in the early days there was no formula to determine the start of a month. A new month was started when the new moon was first observed. It is not clear when the current rule-based calendar replaced the observation-based calendar. According to the book "Jewish Calendar Mystery Dispelled" by George Zinberg, the patriarch Hillel II published these rules in 358 A.D. But, according to The Encyclopedia Judaica, Hillel II may have only published the 19-year rule for determining the occurrence of leap years. I have yet to find a specific date when the current set of rules were known to be in use.

My note: *While this website is therefore not a definite proof of the Jewish dates it is proof of when the New Moons could be observed, as these tables are based on lunar cycles that have held true since at least Babylonian times. We know at the least, that in the time of Christ months started no later than the new moon observance. While it is possible that the new moon could have been obscured by weather conditions, we know that the Jews never allowed any month to be longer than 30 days. They were very zealous to observe the new moon and the beginning of the month would never have been more than a day off. To prevent any such problems the Jews had lookouts posted in the Sinai desert where it almost never rained, who relayed their sightings by signal fires to Jerusalem. Also, it is important to note that since Jewish days start six hours earlier than our calendar days, the website calls the last 18 hours of that day by the same date as our calendar day. In other words, if a Jewish day starts at 6 PM Tuesday and ends at 6 PM Wednesday, it is called Wednesday. Also see Appendix 1 at the end of this paper. from The Temple--Its Ministry and Services, Alfred Edersheim, The New Moon*

born in 6 BC. However, I believe that the facts bear out that Jesus was born in early 4 BC. There is no doubt from ancient Roman records that Herod the Great died in 4 BC. Josephus recorded a lunar eclipse that occurred shortly before Herod's death that astronomers tell us occurred on the early morning of March 13th of 4 BC.^a We know from Matthew 2, that Jesus was born before Herod died, so any date later than 4 BC is not possible. Some scholars, anxious to move Christ's birth near to the date when astronomers say there was a conjunction of the planets in the sky to form a "Super Star," propose a birth date of 6 BC, two years before the death of Herod, on the basis of the following passage in Matthew.

Matthew 2:16 "When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi."

There are two problems with the argument that Matthew 2:16 indicates that Jesus was two years old before the Magi showed up in Bethlehem:

1. If Herod had been told that Christ had been born two years before the arrival of the Magi, he would have told his soldiers to kill every child under three or four. He wouldn't have trusted young soldiers to distinguish the age of infants to within a month. If Herod thought they had that capability, he would have told them to kill all infants between 22 months and 26 months or something like that. As it was, I believe that Herod, knowing the child was only months old, gave them two years leeway for error. We know, according to Luke 2, that after the

^a *Data on historical Lunar Eclipses found at "Eclipse Predictions by Fred Espanak, NASA/GSFC"*

<http://sunearth.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse/LEcat/LE-0099-0000.html>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Universal Time*at Greatest Eclipse</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Saros #</i>	<i>Gamma</i>	<i>Pen. Mag.</i>	<i>Umb. Mag</i>	<i>S. D. Par</i>	<i>S.D. Total</i>	<i>L GST (0 UT) h</i>	<i>Mo on RA h</i>	<i>Mo on Dec B</i>
4 BC	Mar 13	00:52	Partial	71	0.796	1.456	0.370	70m	-	11.2	11.38	3.2

*For any eclipse in the catalog, the start and end times *of the partial eclipse phases can be calculated by respectively subtracting and adding the partial semi-duration (S.D. Par) to the instant of greatest eclipse. Likewise, the start and end times of the total eclipse can be calculated by respectively subtracting and adding the total semi-duration (S.D. Tot) to the instant of greatest eclipse.*

**Greenwich Mean Time on 24 Hour Time or Military Time.*

In Israel the correct time is 2 hours greater than GMT, so the greatest eclipse occurred at 02:52 AM in Israel in 12 Hour Time and the start time was 01:42 AM and the end time was 04:02 AM March 13th, 4 BC.

dedication of the Lord, the news about the birth had been spread all over Jerusalem by Simeon, Anna and their friends. Those rumors in Jerusalem at this time were no doubt part of the atmosphere that caused Herod to take the story the Magi told of the birth of a King seriously.

2. If Christ was born two years before the death of Herod that would mean that “the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea,” which is ascertainable from history as being no earlier than 26 BC,^a would have put the time when “the Word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert” (Luke 3:1) 32 years after the birth of Christ, yet we know that Christ was not more than 30 years old at this time because Luke 3:23 tells us that Jesus was “about thirty years” old at a time subsequent to the action in Luke 3:1.

Therefore, it is historically impossible for the word of God to be accurate and have Christ born two years before the death of Herod the Great. Furthermore, based on the date of the “Word of God” coming to John the Baptist in the desert, and the age of Christ, I believe that the date is firmly established between late 5 BC and early 4 BC.

The Birth Day

The actual day of the birth of Jesus Christ is also a subject of much speculation. In ancient times (about the 6th century AD) the Western Church picked December 25. The Eastern Church picked the same day, December 25. However, when they finally accepted the 11-day shift that the Gregorian Calendar required they refused to shift the time of Christmas. The previous year’s Christmas was celebrated exactly 365 days before the next year’s Christmas, which according to the newly accepted Gregorian Calendar was January 6. They therefore still celebrate January 6. There is no record of why the date of December 25th was picked. However, I believe they picked it out of its connection to Hanukah. I will explain this later. I believe, they were about a month off of the real date. Long ago I was taught by my pastor that the shepherds would not have been in the hills of Judea in the dead of winter (Luke 2:8). I accepted that as fact for many years. However, I have since learned that statement reveals an ignorance of actual agricultural and weather conditions in Judea. In Judea it only rains in the winter and very early spring. The winter rains create winter grass in the hills of Judea. The soil is so shallow in the hills that immediately after the end of the rainy season it dries up and the grass withers. Because of this flocks are moved into the hills in the winter to use the limited time they can graze there. Winters are relatively mild in Judea and I have since personally witnessed flocks grazing in the hills of Judea in the dead of winter. As I later discovered, for the sheep in Shepherd’s Field, that wasn’t an important fact as the sheep were so numerous that they had to be fed out of feeding troughs (mangers) scattered throughout the fields.

^a Depending on whether you take the reign of Tiberius as starting from the death of Augustus, or the date of Tiberius’ co-regency it could be argued as 26 or 28 AD. However, the usual practice of the time was to date from the year of co-regency.

I believe the birth of Jesus occurred on January 31, 4 BC (Julian Calendar). That date is the Jewish date of 3 Adar. Why? Because that date would have put Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in Jerusalem, at the Temple for Mary's purification and Jesus' dedication on the Fast of Esther, just one day before the Feast of Purim. I believe that is the date based on my conclusions about Josephus' record about the Golden Eagle and one-day High Priest as explained in the previous section. That date supports a pattern of Feast Days being prophetic of actual events as I will explain in the next section. I arrived at that date using informed speculation, but when I counted back the days to discover the day of His birth, I was convinced that there was something more here than speculation. Why? The date I was led to was also the date that Zerubbabel and Joshua, at God's command completed the Second Temple, the third day of the month Adar.

Ezra 6:14-15 "So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. The temple was completed on the **third day of the month Adar**, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius."

This was an occasion very evocative of the birth of Jesus! For several years, the Lord has made me very aware that one of the central prophecies of the Old Testament was that the "son of David" would build the Temple of the LORD. Even more important was the understanding that the promised Temple wouldn't be built by Solomon or of stone. The real Temple would be made up of the birth, life, and death of Jesus Christ. Another thing the Lord had made me aware of was the dual lineage of Jesus Christ through his human parent, Mary. The dual lineage was both from the line of the King, through Mary's father, and from the line of the High Priest through Mary's mother. The two men, Zerubbabel and Joshua, who built the temple dedicated on the third day of Adar were both ancestors of Jesus Christ as prophesied below:

Haggai 2:21-23 "Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overturn royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall, each by the sword of his brother. On that day,' declares the LORD Almighty, '**I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,**' declares the LORD, '**and I will make you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,**' declares the LORD Almighty."

Zechariah 6:11-13 "Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, **Joshua son of Jehozadak**. Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: '**Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.**'"

The third day of Adar, when the Temple of Zerubbabel and Joshua was completed in about 517 BC, thus perfectly foreshadowed the day that the true Temple prophesied to be built by the son of

David was completed.^a On that day Christ began his work as the true High Priest and King making the true and efficacious offerings to God the Father in God's true Temple. It took Him 33 years to fulfill the offerings of His righteous life, thoughts and acts and the offering of His innocent blood at His death.

It was interesting to remember that some had speculated that in about the fifth Century AD, some in the ancient Church adopted December 25th as the birth date of our Lord because it corresponded with the 25th of Kislev on the Jewish calendar which was the date of the **rededication** of the Temple in the 2nd Century BC.^b Could this be because there was a lingering memory or tradition that the birth of our Lord took place on the day the Temple was dedicated? They just chose the wrong dedication of the Temple.

On the next page I have attached a table showing how 3 Adar was 41 days before the purification of Mary at the Temple in Jerusalem.

^a **2 Samuel 7:12-13** *When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.*

^b Alfred Edersheim, 1874, *The Temple, its Ministry and Services, The Feast of the Dedication of the Temple*, "the date of the Feast of the Dedication--the 25th of Chislev--seems to have been adopted by the ancient Church as that of the birth of our blessed Lord--Christmas--the Dedication of the true Temple, which was the body of Jesus."

Calculation of Birth of Christ Counting back from Fast of Esther

Based on the following calendar conversion website at <http://genealogy.org/~scottlee/calconvert.cgi>. (no longer available)

A Hebrew calendar converter is still available at <http://www.uwm.edu/~corre/calendar.html>

Also <https://www.hebcal.com/converter/?hd=14&hm=Nisan&hy=3790&h2g=1>

Also <http://www.shiva.com/learning-center/resources/date-conversion/>

Other valuable information about the Hebrew Calendar is also available at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1584/index.html>

Julian Date	Modern Civil (Gregorian) Calendar	Jewish Calendar	Day of Christ's Life	Events
1719993		3 Adar I 3757	1st Day	Birth – Anniversary of the completion of Zeubbabel's Temple
1719994	6:00 PM January 29, 4 BC to 6:00 PM January 30, 4 BC	4 Adar I 3757	2nd Day	
1719995	6:00 PM January 30, 4 BC to 6:00 PM January 31, 4 BC	5 Adar I 3757	3rd Day	
1719996	6:00 PM January 31, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 1, 4 BC	6 Adar I 3757	4th Day	
1719997	6:00 PM February 1, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 2, 4 BC	7 Adar I 3757	5th Day	
1719998	6:00 PM February 2, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 3, 4 BC	8 Adar I 3757	6th Day	
1719999	6:00 PM February 3, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 4, 4 BC	9 Adar I 3757	7th Day	
1720000	6:00 PM February 4, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 5, 4 BC	10 Adar I 3757	8th Day	Circumcision on the eighth day
1720001	6:00 PM February 5, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 6, 4 BC	11 Adar I 3757	9th Day	
1720002	6:00 PM February 6, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 7, 4 BC	12 Adar I 3757	10th Day	
1720003	6:00 PM February 7, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 8, 4 BC	13 Adar I 3757	11th Day	
1720004	6:00 PM February 8, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 9, 4 BC	14 Adar I 3757	12th Day	
1720005	6:00 PM February 9, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 10, 4 BC	15 Adar I 3757	13th Day	
1720006	6:00 PM February 10, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 11, 4 BC	16 Adar I 3757	14th Day	
1720007	6:00 PM February 11, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 12, 4 BC	17 Adar I 3757	15th Day	
1720008	6:00 PM February 12, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 13, 4 BC	18 Adar I 3757	16th Day	
1720009	6:00 PM February 13, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 14, 4 BC	19 Adar I 3757	17th Day	
1720010	6:00 PM February 14, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 15, 4 BC	20 Adar I 3757	18th Day	
1720011	6:00 PM February 15, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 16, 4 BC	21 Adar I 3757	19th Day	
1720012	6:00 PM February 16, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 17, 4 BC	22 Adar I 3757	20th Day	
1720013	6:00 PM February 17, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 18, 4 BC	23 Adar I 3757	21st Day	
1720014	6:00 PM February 18, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 19, 4 BC	24 Adar I 3757	22nd Day	
1720015	6:00 PM February 19, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 20, 4 BC	25 Adar I 3757	23rd Day	
1720016	6:00 PM February 20, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 21, 4 BC	26 Adar I 3757	24th Day	
1720017	6:00 PM February 21, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 22, 4 BC	27 Adar I 3757	25th Day	
1720018	6:00 PM February 22, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 23, 4 BC	28 Adar I 3757	26th Day	
1720019	6:00 PM February 23, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 24, 4 BC	29 Adar I 3757	27th Day	
1720020	6:00 PM February 24, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 25, 4 BC	30 Adar I 3757	28th Day	
1720021	6:00 PM February 25, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 26, 4 BC	1 Adar II 3757	29th Day	
1720022	6:00 PM February 26, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 27, 4 BC	2 Adar II 3757	30th Day	
1720023	6:00 PM February 27, 4 BC to 6:00 PM February 28, 4 BC	3 Adar II 3757	31st Day	
1720024	6:00 PM February 28, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 1, 4 BC	4 Adar II 3757	32nd Day	
1720025	6:00 PM March 1, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 2, 4 BC	5 Adar II 3757	33rd Day	
1720026	6:00 PM March 2, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 3, 4 BC	6 Adar II 3757	34th Day	
1720027	6:00 PM March 3, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 4, 4 BC	7 Adar II 3757	35th Day	
1720028	6:00 PM March 4, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 5, 4 BC	8 Adar II 3757	36th Day	
1720029	6:00 PM March 5, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 6, 4 BC	9 Adar II 3757	37th Day	
1720030	6:00 PM March 6, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 7, 4 BC	10 Adar II 3757	38th Day	
1720031	6:00 PM March 7, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 8, 4 BC	11 Adar II 3757	39th Day	
1720032	6:00 PM March 8, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 9, 4 BC	12 Adar II 3757	40th Day	
1720033	6:00 PM March 9, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 10, 4 BC	13 Adar II 3757	41st Day	Dedication in the Temple & Purification of Mary – Fast of Esther
1720034	6:00 PM March 10, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 11, 4 BC	14 Adar II 3757	42nd Day	First Day of Feast of Purim
1720035	6:00 PM March 11, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 12, 4 BC	15 Adar II 3757	43rd Day	Second Day of Feast of Purim
1720036	6:00 PM March 12, 4 BC to 6:00 PM March 13, 4 BC	16 Adar II 3757	43rd Day	Eclipse of the Moon from 1:42 to 4:02 AM

Dedication of Jesus Christ, Purification of His Mother Fast of Esther 4 BC – 41 Days After the Birth of Christ

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1720033, Day of week: Monday, Gregorian calendar: 10 March 4 BC (modern civil calendar), Julian calendar: 12 March 4 BC (old civil calendar), Jewish calendar: 13 Adar II 3757 (3757/7/13)

This date is the benchmark from which, the previous date, the date of Jesus' birth was measured.

The dedication of the first-born son was to occur when he was one month old, which in Jesus' case would have been any time during the one-month period between 4 Adar II and 3 Nisan, 4 BC. This was dictated by the Mosaic Law in Numbers:

Numbers 18:15-16 “The first offspring of every **womb**, both man and animal, that is offered to the LORD is yours. But you must redeem every firstborn son and every firstborn male of unclean animals. When they are **a month old**, you must redeem them at the redemption price set at five shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.”

You will note from this verse that it was the first born from every “womb” not from every man. In other words, it was not the first-born son of each male, but the first-born son of each woman. This in itself points to the importance of the woman in the Virgin Birth of Christ.

Joseph took him to be dedicated according to this Law on the same day on which Mary was required to be purified. That day was to be on the 41st day of His life. On the eighth day He had been circumcised. Then on the thirty-third day after that Mary was purified. The day of Christ's birth is counted as the first day. This also was dictated by the Mosaic Law in Leviticus.

Leviticus 12:1-4,6,8 “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. **On the eighth day** the boy is to be circumcised. Then the woman must wait **thirty-three days** to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. -----““When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (*for Mary in 4 BC, the Temple in Jerusalem*) a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering.----- If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering.””

This purification would have been on the Fast of Esther. Of course, this all hangs on my conclusions based on Josephus' history that told us about the destruction of the idol over the Temple gate and the one-day tenure of a righteous High Priest. The Fast of Esther was significant in that it was the day on which Israel's destiny was cast, and it was also the day before the Feast

of Purim (also called the Feast of Esther). Significantly, Esther means “Star” Or “Morning Star” in the Persian language.

Luke recounts the appearance of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus at the Temple in Jerusalem for this purification of Mary and the dedication of Jesus 33 days after the circumcision of Jesus:

Luke 2:21-39 “On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. When **the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed,**^a Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”^b), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”^c Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.”

The Book of Esther shows the origin of the date for the Fast of Esther.

Esther 3:13 “Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king’s provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews--young and old, women and little children--on a single day, **the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar,** and to plunder their goods.”

^a See previous quotation of Leviticus 12:1-4,6,8

^b **Exodus 13:1-2** The LORD said to Moses, “Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal.”

^c Note that we can know by the offering made to for purification, that Mary and Joseph were poor. This also tells us that the purification occurred before the Magi had made their gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. The gold would have disqualified them for the offering of the poor.

According to **The Feasts of the Lord**, Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, p. 185 “Sometime after the institution of Purim (*Circa 474 BC*), Adar 13 became connected to the holiday and was celebrated as the “Fast of Esther.”

It is true that the Fast of Esther fell into complete disuse in later times, probably because during the time of the Maccabees the Jews had a great victory over the Syrian Nicanor on Adar 13 and fasting was later forbidden (at least by the 2nd Century AD) on that date in honor of the victory. Thus, if this ban was in effect in 4 BC,^a the Fast of Esther could only be celebrated on years in which there were 13 months and there was a month called Adar II. On that year the fast could be celebrated without violating the prohibition against fasting on Adar 13. The year Christ was born was such a year.

These passages also show the origin of the date of the Feast of Purim. You will note that the date I have indicated at the beginning of the section is 13th Adar II (also called Adar Shenei) not Adar I. In all Jewish leap years Purim was always celebrated on the leap month so that it would always be celebrated one month before Passover.^b

Esther 9:17-21 “This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy. That is why rural Jews--those living in villages--observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other. Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, to have them celebrate annually the **fourteenth and fifteenth days** of the month of Adar.”

Esther 9:24-26 “For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the **pur** (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. But when the plot came to the king’s attention, he issued written orders that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. (Therefore, these days were called **Purim**, from the word pur.)”

Esther 9:30-31 “And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Xerxes--words of goodwill and assurance-- **to establish these days of Purim** at their designated times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them, and as they had established for themselves and their descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation.”

^a *According to Edersheim, the religious leaders did not have much respect for the Maccabees during the time of their reign, as the successors of Judas tended to be autocratic and brutal. This makes it possible that this prohibition was not even in place at the time of Christ.*

^b **The Feasts of the Lord**, Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, p. 178 “Purim is a late winter feast (late February or March), the last feast of the biblical year. It occurs on the 14th day of Adar, the twelfth Hebrew month (or in a leap year, on the 14th day of Adar Shenei, the thirteenth month), exactly one month before Passover.”

We therefore know from a comparison of the Jewish Calendar with the known date of the eclipse (see footnote a, page 30) that the eclipse succeeded the Fast of Esther by three days and the Feast of Esther/Purim by half a day. If we accept my conclusions about the significance of Josephus history, we can see how the Fast of Esther and the Feast of Esther (Purim) harmonize with actual events of that day in 4 BC.

1. The Feast of Purim is literally the feast of lots. The lot of the Jews, not to mention the lot of the whole world, was cast in the Child that was dedicated as the Son of His Father (the LORD) that day.
2. The Feast of Purim is also known as the feast of Esther. Esther means “star” in the ancient Persian language. I believe the LORD intended this to stand prophetically for the star that would become visible over Bethlehem that night in 4 BC.
3. In the middle of the same day, a graven image of an Eagle which had been put by Herod on the gate of the Temple would have been torn down before the baby Jesus was brought in to be dedicated and held up toward the Eastern Gate as a testimony that one day the Messiah would come through one such child.^a
4. Because on the day of the Fast of Esther for the only time in the 109-year history of the corrupt Herodian High Priests, the High Priest disqualified himself and had someone else^b

^a ***Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 6, Verse 3.** ----- and a report being come to them that the king was dead, ----, in the very middle of the day, they got upon the place, they pulled down the eagle, and cut it into pieces with axes, while a great number of the people were in the temple.*

^b *Matthias was the official High Priest and as such was responsible for what went on in the Temple. It is hard to believe that it was just a coincidence that he managed to come up with an excuse for being absent on that one day. I believe that he knew the conspiracy was afoot to tear down the Eagle. Considering that we know the number of people involved in the plot exceeded forty (forty of them were caught and executed), it is unlikely that the news of it could have escaped his attention. Knowing what was about to happen, Matthias was left with a dilemma. He knew that Herod was dying and could not survive long. He also knew that the presence of the golden eagle was considered a sacrilege by most of the people. If he prevented the destruction of the eagle he would be hated by the people and would likely be deposed as High Priest as soon as Herod was dead. However, if he was acting as the High Priest on that day, Herod would likely hold him responsible and have him executed during the weeks before he died. What was Matthias' solution? He got someone else to officiate for that day so that he could say that he wasn't there, and he couldn't be held accountable for what happened by either Herod or the people. That begs the question: Who might Matthias get to stand in as High Priest and ignorantly face the danger of execution? I can only surmise that he picked someone who he despised and who he wouldn't mind seeing being killed by Herod! Considering that the man he got (his kinsman Joseph, the son of Ellemus) wound up overseeing the dedication of Jesus Christ as the Firstborn Son, he was undoubtedly one of those few priests like Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, who was a true believer in the promise of God!*

officiate for one day. That day was a Fast. The only fast that occurred during that span of months was the Fast of Esther.

As it turned out, Joseph the acting High Priest didn't have anything to do with the arrest of the conspirators. The captain of King Herod's guard saw what was happening and called on the King's guard to come into the Temple to arrest the men.

*For the historical record to back this up see Josephus' passages from his *Antiquities and Wars* on pages 24-27.*

The Arrival of the Magi
The time of the lunar eclipse in Jerusalem
The night of the 12th of March, the Feast of Purim (Esther).

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1720035, Day of week: Wednesday, Gregorian calendar: 12 March 0004 BC (modern civil calendar), Julian calendar: 14 March 0004 BC (old civil calendar), Jewish calendar: 15 Adar II 3757 (3757/7/15)

One of the popular views which has always really mystified me was the idea that the Star of Bethlehem was a star in the sense of our astronomy. In modern astronomy a star is a sun. To be more precise it is a self-luminous gaseous spheroidal celestial body of great mass which produces energy by means of nuclear fusion reactions. In non-scientific parlance the term “star” could also include “planets” like Mars, Venus, Jupiter, or Neptune. It would even include points of light that are actually “galaxies.” It should also be kept in mind that a basic principal of Biblical interpretation is that the words of the Bible must be interpreted by the understanding of those words at the time they were written. The term “star” in Jesus’ day meant any bright light in the heavens. During the 1st Century AD, the Roman poet Virgil ^a even described a comet as a “star.” The “Star of Bethlehem” was certainly not a “star” in the sense of a distant sun or galaxy. Nor was it a star in the sense of being one of the bright planets or an alignment of several of them. This was a unique star. This was a star which, according to a prophecy given by the Holy Spirit, would rise out of the land of Israel / Jacob. This star would presage the coming of the promised Messiah and King.

Numbers 24:17 “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab.”

According to the Magi (Matthew 2:9) they saw it when they were in the east and followed it toward Jerusalem (the land of Jacob). I challenge you to try to follow any conventional star or planet in the universe (except the North Star) and you will find yourself going east half the time and west half the time as the planet or star transits from the eastern horizon to the western horizon. Part of the profession of the Magi was a study of the stars for signs. The Star of Bethlehem which the Magi followed was obviously a unique celestial event. It had to have been some kind of bright light (to the ancient mind a star) which was stationary in the heavens over Israel. Maybe it was caused by the gathering of the host of Angels over Bethlehem.^b Maybe it was a shining orb created by the LORD for just that purpose. Whatever it was, to the Magi, it fit their definition of a star. But it was a star unlike any other they had ever seen. It took its position over Israel (Jacob) and did not move! It must have caused a sensation among the Magi in the

^a *In his work The Aeneid.*

^b *Luke 2:13-15a “Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.’ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,”*

east. One of their earliest predecessors was Balaam who uttered the original prophecy of this “star” which we read above.

This should raise a question. Why did the Magi, far away in the East, near the Tigris and Euphrates see the star over Judea and yet it went unnoticed in Judea? The answer is that in the east, where the Magi were, there were no clouds at that season. A “star” high enough in the sky over Bethlehem could have been seen from the regions of the Tigris and Euphrates where the Magi were. At the same time, in Judea, it was the heart of rainy season. Probably, there were no nights with a clear sky.^a

Between the birth of Christ, which coincided with the rising of the star, and the arrival of the Magi from the East would have been at least eight days. That was the shortest time one could travel by fast camel to Jerusalem from the region of Babylon according to ancient authorities.^b I believe it took 42 days for the Magi to notice the stationary star that had risen above Judea (Jacob), to interpret it, organize an expedition, and travel to Jerusalem. That would have put them in Jerusalem at the time of the second day of the Feast of Purim two days after Jesus had been dedicated just at the end of the rainy season. Because everyone in Jerusalem saw the eclipse that night when they executed the men who tore down the eagle (as recorded by Josephus), we know there was a clear sky. I suggest that the Magi came out of their interview with Herod and looked up and saw the star for the first time since they had come out of the desert. They followed it to Bethlehem. Below is the Biblical account from Matthew:

Matthew 2:1-9 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.” When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you

^a **Monthly Rainfall for Jerusalem 1952-1996**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Inches	5.5	4.4	4.6	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	2.7	5.1	24.3

Monthly Rainfall for Baghdad 1888 - 1990

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Inches	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.8	1.0	6.1

^b Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book I, Chapter 1*. “Only eight days’ journey, though, according to Philo’s western ideas of it, by a difficult road, separated them (Babylon) from Palestine”

will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.” Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.” After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

At the time the Magi would have arrived in Jerusalem Herod the Great was in an orgy of bloodletting. On that date, according to Josephus, he had forty young men burned alive for tearing down the image of the Roman eagle over the gate of the Temple (**Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 6**). About a week later, Herod the Great had his son Antipater put to death. Antipater had been his heir to that time. Also, Herod, knowing he was about to die and that the Jews hated him, took steps to make sure his death would be a day of mourning among the Jews. He had all the principal men of the Jewish nation shut up in the Hippodrome with orders that upon his death they should all be slaughtered. He did this solely because he wanted to make sure that the Jews wouldn’t publicly rejoice at his death. Their rejoicing would be overcome by their mourning. It is little wonder that the slaughter of no more than ten to twenty infants in Bethlehem was overlooked by the historical records upon which Josephus must have relied as he wrote of these events almost ninety years later. I believe that the night that Herod’s soldiers slew the infants, and Jesus and his parents escaped to Egypt was the night after the moon was eclipsed. This also fulfills the image of Christ’s birth which is presented in Revelation 12:1a.^b It also brings up the tantalizing question of the interpretation of the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 24:23: “**The moon will be abashed**, the sun ashamed; for the LORD Almighty will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before its elders, gloriously.” The first time the Lord appeared in Jerusalem as a baby the day was marked by a total lunar eclipse, the last time he appeared was marked by a total blacking out of the sun during His crucifixion! Another passage that seems to speak of this is Joel 2:31-32 “The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.” You will notice that it says the moon will be “turned to blood.” It is a well-known astronomical phenomenon that during a total eclipse of the moon, the moon turns red.

^a **Revelation 12:1-6** *A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. She was pregnant and cried out in pain as she was about to give birth. Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne.*

^b **Revelation 12:1** *“A great and wondrous sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.”*

There is another question that can be raised about the birth of Jesus. Why were Mary and Joseph still in Bethlehem nearly a month and a half after His birth? We know that Joseph came to Bethlehem from his hometown in Nazareth because of the Census, and we can speculate that Mary was not recovered enough to travel back to Nazareth for a few days or even weeks. I believe that they were still in Bethlehem because they knew that it was God's will that Mary be purified at the Temple in Jerusalem and that her first born son also be dedicated there. There was another reason barring their return to Nazareth. According to Josephus, an orgy of banditry and lawlessness was breaking out around Sepphoris (next door to Nazareth) that would have made returning there risky. At any rate, it was God's plan for the Magi to arrive in time to find the child still in Bethlehem.

The accounts of Josephus and Luke 2:1-4 about the Census of Cyrenius differ. My reasoning concerning the apparent differences between the two accounts is as follows.

1. The Bible is the document to which primary veracity is ascribed over any other document.
2. Josephus is a very accurate recorder of his own time, but the farther he gets from his own time, the less accurate his history is. The taxation of Cyrenius occurred at least 40 years before Josephus' birth.
3. Luke 2:1-4 indicates that there was more than one census taken by Cyrenius.
4. Acts 5:34-37 also written by Luke connects the census of Cyrenius with the revolt of Judas.
5. In Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVII, Chap. 1:1 Josephus connects a census of Cyrenius (evidently the second) taken after the death of Herod (and the accession of Archelaus) with the revolt of Judas. This census was actually more of a tax assessment than a census.
6. I believe that Josephus mistakenly connected the revolt of Judas with the wrong census and that Luke and the Holy Scriptures are correct. This would have meant the revolt began about a year earlier than Josephus contends.
7. If this is true, then the revolt in which Judas of Galilee declared he was the Messiah (implied by Gamaliel in Acts 5:34-37) must have taken place against the backdrop of the Star over Bethlehem and the rumors in Jerusalem that the Messiah had come. We also know of course that Herod had died. This revolt took place, according to Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVII, Chap. 1:1, in the vicinity of the major town of Sepphoris and must have embroiled the little village of Nazareth which was only a couple of miles away. The consequent Roman action resulted in the enslavement of the population of Sepphoris and probably the population of Nazareth. At the very least there was a massive dislocation of the population. This explains the fact that when Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned to Nazareth some years later, they never reestablished contact with Mary's sister who was living in Capernaum and was the mother of John and James.
8. I recently saw a TV program speaking of the fact that a prominent archaeologist Sir William Ramsey, once questioned the so-called historical errors in Luke. One of these errors concerned the historicity of the census ordered by the Roman Governor of Syria. According to this program Ramsey later discovered that the Governor had been Governor twice and had in fact ordered two censuses. I assume the source they are referring to is Ramsay, W.M. The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament (1915).

Death of Herod Before Passover after the Lunar eclipse in Jerusalem Between the 12th of March and the 1st of April 4 BC

We have the following testimony from Alfred Edersheim in his book:

The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, by Alfred Edersheim APPENDIX VII

1. The first and most certain date is that of the death of Herod the Great. Our Lord was born before the death of Herod, and, as we judge from the Gospel-history, very shortly before that event. Now the year of Herod's death has been ascertained with, we may say, absolute certainty, as shortly before the Passover of the year 750 A.U.C., which corresponds to about the 12th of April of the year 4 before Christ (*Julian Calendar*), according to our common reckoning, More particularly, shortly before the death of Herod there was a lunar eclipse (Jos. Ant. xvii. 6. 4), which, it is astronomically ascertained, occurred on the night from the 12th to the 13th of March of the year 4 before Christ. Thus, the death of Herod must have taken place between the 12th of March and the 12th of April, or, say, about the end of March (comp. Ant. xvii. 8. 1).

We know that Herod killed his son Antipater after the eclipse. He then survived his son by only five days. This death of Herod had to have occurred at least seven days prior to the ensuing Passover. Thus, we can calculate that Herod died sometime between the 12th of March and the 1st of April in 4 BC. This is indicated by the following passages from Josephus:

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 1, Chapter 33, Verse 8. “So Herod, having survived the slaughter of his son **five days**, died,

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 2, Chapter 1, Verse 2 “Now the necessity which Archelaus was under of taking a journey to Rome was the occasion of new disturbances; for when he had mourned for his father **seven days**, ---”

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 2, Chapter 1, Verse 2. “--- And indeed, at the feast of unleavened bread, which was **now at hand**, and is by the Jews called **the Passover**,”

Return from Egypt by Joseph, Mary and Jesus Between 2 BC and 6 AD.

We know that Joseph, Mary and Jesus came back to Israel while Archelaus was still reigning

Luke 2:19-23a After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.” So, he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that **Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod**, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth.

Josephus tells us that Archelaus left for Rome immediately after Herod’s death to plead for the Kingdom. Most of Herod’s family went to plead against him. There was an interval of some time before he came back confirmed as King in Judea by Augustus and the Senate. He reigned until 6 AD. Jesus came back some time during this interval. However, just after the departure of Archelaus to Rome, being just after the census that brought Joseph to Bethlehem, an insurrection broke out in the precincts of Sepphoris in Galilee. It happens that Nazareth was located just four miles from Sepphoris. These are some of the pertinent passages from Josephus.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 10 Verse 5. There was also **Judas**, the son of that Ezekias who had been head of the robbers; which Ezekias was a very strong man and had with great difficulty been caught by Herod. This **Judas**, having gotten together a multitude of men of a profligate character about **Sepphoris in Galilee**, made an assault upon the palace [there,] and seized upon all the weapons that were laid up in it, and with them armed every one of those that were with him, and carried away what money was left there; and he became terrible to all men, by tearing and rending those that came near him; and all this in order to raise himself, and out of an ambitious desire of the royal dignity; and he hoped to obtain that as the reward not of his virtuous skill in war, but of his extravagance in doing injuries.

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 2, Chapter 4, Verse 1b. At this time there were great disturbances in the country, and that in many places; and the opportunity that now offered itself induced a great many to set up for kings. And indeed in Idumea two thousand of Herod's veteran soldiers got together, and armed and fought against those of the king's party; against whom Achiabus, the king's first cousin, fought, and that out of some of the places that were the most strongly fortified; but so as to avoid a direct conflict with them in the plains. In **Sepphoris** also, a city of **Galilee**, there was one **Judas** (the son of that arch-robber Hezekias, who formerly overran the country, and had been subdued by king Herod); this man got no small multitude together, and brake open the place where the royal armor was laid up, and armed those about him, and attacked those that were so earnest to gain the dominion.

Antiquities of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 10 Verse 9. As soon as Varus was once informed of the state of Judea by Sabinus's writing to him, he was afraid for the legion

he had left there; so he took the two other legions, (for there were three legions in all belonging to Syria,) and four troops of horsemen, with the several auxiliary forces which either the kings or certain of the tetrarchs afforded him, and made what haste he could to assist those that were then besieged in Judea. He also gave order that all that were sent out for this expedition, should make haste to Ptolemais. The citizens of Berytus also gave him fifteen hundred auxiliaries as he passed through their city. Aretas also, the king of Arabia Petrea, out of his hatred to Herod, and in order to purchase the favor of the Romans, sent him no small assistance, besides their footmen and horsemen; and when he had now collected all his forces together, he committed part of them to his son, and to a friend of his, and sent them upon an expedition into Galilee, which lies in the neighborhood of Ptolemais; who made an attack upon the enemy, and put them to flight, and took **Sepphoris, and made its inhabitants slaves, and burnt the city.**

Here is the relevant passage from the Bible:

Acts 5:34-37 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed them: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, **Judas the Galilean** appeared **in the days of the census** and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

Because of the disturbances that plagued Galilee, and particularly the regions around Nazareth, in the years just after Herod’s death, I suspect that Joseph and Mary stayed in Egypt several years. This, together with the fact that the people around Nazareth became either captives, rebels, or war refugees, helps explain why Mary’s relatives (i.e. John the Baptist and Mary’s sister, the mother of John and James.) seemed to have lost touch with her after last hearing of the attempt on the life of Jesus as a newborn in Bethlehem. Reading the passage in Acts, I could not help thinking that Judas the Galileean must have taken advantage of the Star of Bethlehem, and all the rumors to the effect that the Messiah had come to claim that he was the Messiah. So always do evil men try to twist the truth to the service of their lie.

Jesus' Trip to Jerusalem with His Parents for Passover

March 27, 9 AD

Reckoning from the day of His birth, Jesus would have been 12 years old from January 29, 9 AD to January 29, 10 AD. The Passover indicated here then would have been the Passover of 9 AD. That occurred on Friday, Nisan 14, 9 AD by the Jewish Calendar. That was comparable to Friday, March 27, 9 AD by the Gregorian Calendar.

Below is the account of that visit.

Luke 2:40-42 “And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.”

Although today, the age that under most Jewish groups, a male Jewish child becomes “bar-mitzvah” (a son of the commandment) and eligible under tradition to read and comment upon the scriptures at thirteen, according to Edersheim (*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1883, i. 235 and note) in those days the legal age was customarily anticipated by one or even two years in the matter of going up to the Temple. Thus, this was the first time that Jesus was eligible to attend the lectures that he attended on this occasion. He was no doubt dismayed at the lack of understanding in the high councils of Jewish thought.

Luke 2:43-45 “*When they had fulfilled the days*, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.”

Literally, this is “when they had fulfilled the days.” This is an important distinction because the Feast of Unleavened Bread (commonly called Passover) lasts a full week. However, attendance was only required the first two days. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Book 1, Chapter 10: “Only on the two first days of the Feast of Passover was personal attendance in the Temple necessary. With the third day commenced the so-called half-holydays, when it was lawful to return to one’s home, a provision of which, no doubt, many availed themselves. Indeed, there was really nothing of special interest to detain the pilgrims. For, the Passover had been eaten, the festive sacrifice (or Chagigah) offered, and the first ripe barely reaped and brought to the Temple, and waved as the Omer of first flour before the Lord. Hence, in view of the well-known Rabbinic provision, the expression in the Gospel-narrative concerning the ‘Parents’ of Jesus, ‘when they had fulfilled the days,’ cannot necessarily imply that Joseph and the Mother of Jesus had remained in Jerusalem during the whole Paschal week.

Luke 2:46 “After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

We have this from Edersheim, Life, Book 1, Chapter 10: “There were occasions on which the Temple became virtually, though not formally, a Beth ha-Midrash. For we read in the Talmud, that the members of the Temple-Sanhedrin, who on ordinary days sat as a Court of Appeal, from the close of the Morning-to the time of the Evening-Sacrifice, were wont on Sabbaths and feast-days to come out upon ‘the Terrace’ of the Temple, and there to teach. In such popular instruction the utmost latitude of questioning would be given. It is in this audience, which sat on the ground, surrounding and mingling with the Doctors, and hence during, not after the Feast, that we must seek the Child Jesus.”

Interestingly, at that time the officiating High Priest was Annas (High Priest from 6 AD to 14 AD) who was the main instigator in the trial and crucifixion of Jesus some 21 years later. One can only wonder if Annas was one of those who heard Him that day. I wonder if Annas had first marked down Jesus as dangerous person to watch on that day.

Luke 2:47-51 “Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, ‘Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.’ ‘Why were you searching for me?’ he asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’ But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.”

Considering that Jesus had come to fulfill the meaning of Passover, it would not have been strange to find that He was seeking to discover if the religious leaders of His day understood its significance.

Baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist Day of Atonement 26 AD

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1730808, Day of week: Wednesday, Gregorian calendar: 9 September, 26 AD, Jewish calendar: 10 Tishri 3787

The day and year of the baptism of Jesus Christ by John the Baptist has also been the subject of much disagreement. However, the year is easy to place. Comparing Roman history with the Bible nails down the date of the events.

We know from Roman history that Tiberius was co-regent with his stepfather Augustus for two years and then became sole ruler in 14 AD. That made the fourteenth anniversary of his reign fall in 26 AD. The first day after the anniversary would have been regarded as the fifteenth year of his reign. We also know from history that Pontius Pilate began his government of Judea in 26 AD.

Then we have the Biblical account which places the events of Luke 3 in that year.

Luke 3:1-2 In the **fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar--when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea**, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene-- during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, **the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.**

Conclusion, this passage refers to 26 AD.

The first question here is: What is the event being nailed down in Luke 3:1-2? The event is described as “the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.” For some strange reason most scholars have decided that this refers to the beginning of John’s ministry. It always frustrated me to read this passage using this interpretation. I would always ask myself “Why in the world did Luke describe when John started his ministry, when he had to know the important date was when Jesus started his ministry?” However, I would accept this because I had a picture in my mind of John somewhere way away from the Jordan, in the desert, when this “word of God” came to him. I thought that “the word of God” coming to him referred to some special calling or revelation by the Holy Spirit. However, when I traveled to Israel and saw the place on the Jordan where Joshua crossed the Jordan and Jesus was baptized, I realized that if there was ever any place that qualified as a “desert” that place did. Except for the river, there was nothing but rocks and sand dunes for miles in either direction. It was only afterwards that what should have been obvious dawned on me. When John was baptizing in the Jordan he was “in the desert.” When Luke spoke about “the word of God” coming to John, he was not speaking about John receiving a call or a revelation by the Holy Spirit. We know for a fact that John received the Holy Spirit and his call at birth:

Luke 1:13a-17 “you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and **he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.** Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And **he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**”

What then was Luke speaking about in Luke 3:1-2 when he spoke of the coming of “the Word of God” to John the Baptist? He was speaking of it in the same way as the Apostle John spoke of “the Word of God” in his Gospel:

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God.**”

John 1:14-15 “**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.** We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”

Revelation 19:11-13 “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True.^a With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and **his name is the Word of God.**”

Luke was speaking of Jesus Christ as the “Word of God” coming to be baptized in the Jordan, in the wilderness. He actually was speaking of the supremely important date of the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. In the light of the following verse, this fits perfectly.

Luke 3:21-23 “When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “*You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.*” **Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old^b when he began his ministry.**”

If Jesus was born 31 January 4 BC, as I have shown, he would have turned 30 years old on 31 January of 27 AD, thus in September of 26 AD he would have been “about thirty years old.” Thus, this passage nails down both the year of Christ’s baptism and the year of His birth. It does not deal with the start of John’s ministry which I would suggest might have started up to ten

^a See Revelation 3:14. “Faithful and True” is Christ.

^b According to Edersheim in *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* “We have positive evidence that the expression ‘about’ before a numeral meant either a little more or a little less than that exact number. See Midrash on Ruth 1:4 ed. Warsh. p. 39 b.”

years before, based on the time it would have taken to develop his fame among the people and the fact that according to the Law a Levite reached the legitimate age of service at twenty years.^a

To help narrow down the actual date of Jesus' baptism we must also ask the question: What is the interpretation of "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too?" What period does the word "when" refer to? We must concede there could be two interpretations. The period of "when" could be one day. The period of "when" could also be referring to the entire period of John's ministry when he was baptizing. If we accept the first interpretation that it refers to one day, we also accept a view that Jesus and John must have been surrounded by other people being baptized. Yet nothing in the Scriptures indicate that anyone but John knew who the Messiah was until Jesus came back after His temptation (John 1:28-31). However, the verse says, "when all the people were being baptized," not "when some." "All" of the people were baptized only during the entire ministry of John, not on one afternoon when Jesus might have been baptized. Consider, John must have been alone with Jesus at His baptism when the Spirit of God had descended like a dove and settled on him with the voice of God saying, "This is my Son." If not, when Jesus returned from the desert, His appearance would have caused a sensation among the people and John's own disciples. That is not at all in evidence in John 1, the account of that Jesus' return to John who was in the company of his disciples. John had to point out to his disciples that Jesus was the one whose baptism he had told them about. If John was alone when he baptized Jesus, we have to conclude then that the period that "when" referred to in Luke 3:21 was the entire period of years when John was baptizing. Luke 3:21 is only saying that during that time during John the Baptist's ministry when he was baptizing Jesus was baptized too. It should be kept in mind that Luke the Apostle wrote these words about thirty years later when that period seemed long distant and was properly described by "when all the people were being baptized."

However, as we have seen, the account in John indicates the John must have been alone with Jesus when he baptized Him. That begs the question: "How could Jesus ever have found John alone?" John was always surrounded by his disciples and those coming to hear him. This problem is solved by the answer to the next question.

The next question is; "What was the precise day of his Baptism?" The Bible doesn't tell us specifically, but we can make some educated guesses based on patterns the Bible has set up. We have seen how the Feasts and Special Days are clearly shadows of the real thing, and that the real thing always seems to occur on the same calendar day as the Feast or Special Day which foreshadowed it. Based on that alone it seems obvious to me that the Day of Atonement is a very good candidate. Consider the following:

According to the Law of Moses, on the special Sabbath of the Day of Atonement the goat on which the lot had been cast according to Leviticus 16 was led into the desert:

Leviticus 16:7-10 "Then he (*the High Priest*) is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to cast **lots** for the two goats--one lot for the

^a 1 Chronicles 23:24

LORD and the other for the scapegoat (Devil). Aaron shall bring the goat whose **lot falls to the LORD** and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot ~~as the scapegoat~~ (for the Devil) shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert ~~as a scapegoat~~ (for the Devil).”

Leviticus 16:20-22,29-30 “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.----- “This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work--whether native-born or an alien living among you-- because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins.”

You will notice that in Leviticus 16:7-10 I scratched out certain words and substituted others. The word translated “scapegoat” in Leviticus 16 is *Azazel* which is the Hebrew אֲזַזֵּל {az·ä·zäl’}. The word only appears in this passage and its meaning is uncertain.

However, in the book **The Feasts of the Lord**, by Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, page 123 says “Some debate exists as to the exact meaning of *azazel*. Some believe it was a reference to Satan, for in Jewish tradition *Azazel* was the name of a fallen angel. However, most scholars believe that the word was derived from the Hebrew word *azel* which carries the idea of ‘escape.’”

This is a comment of The New Unger's Bible Dictionary on Azazel:

AZA'ZEL (aza'zel; Heb. `aza'zel, likely for `azal-zel, i.e., "an entire removal"; Arab. `azala, "remove"). The Heb. term is translated (Lev 16:8,10,26) "scapegoat." It is a word of doubtful interpretation and has been variously understood.

1. By some it is thought to be the name of the goat sent into the desert. The objection to this is that in vv. 10, 26 the Azazel clearly seems to be that for or to which the goat is let loose. ----

3. Many believe Azazel to be a personal being, either a spirit, a demon, or Satan himself. The Cabalists teach that in order to satisfy this evil being and to save Israel from his snares, God sends him the goat burdened with all the "iniquities and transgressions" of His people once a year. But we think it entirely improbable that Moses under divine guidance would cause Israel to recognize a demon whose claims on the people were to be met by the bribe of a sin-laden goat. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Pub. Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois, 1988.

In later Jewish culture and mythology, the name “Azazel” survived as that of a fallen angel whose evil influence led to the corruption of humanity. Because he was a leader among the fallen angels, the Jewish Book of Enoch commanded its readers to “ascribe all sin” to him. This certainly sounds like a description of the Fallen Angel known by the other names of “Satan”, the “Devil”, that Old “Serpent,” or “Lucifer.”

Because most of the Church has never accepted that “Azazel” was another name for Satan, they have never understood the nature of the figure being set up by the two goats on the Day of Atonement and thus never understood that it was fulfilled in 26 AD.

This prevailing interpretation line of *Azazel* led to calling this goat the ‘scapegoat’ since it escaped death and was instead driven into the wilderness.” However, if we interpret *Azazel* to mean Satan, it would mean that the verse should read “one lot for the LORD and the other for Satan” and would line up perfectly with the idea that on this date in 26 AD, Christ was “led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.” Also, if we understand that water often stands for judgement for sin we can see that John putting his hands on Jesus to baptize Him in the water of the Jordan, lines up perfectly with what the High Priest did on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16:21 “He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat’s head.” It is no coincidence that John the Baptist was a Priest, descended from Aaron and Zadok on both his mother’s and father’s side.

Matthew 3:16-17,4:1 “As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.’ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”

Mark 1:9-13 “At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the ~~wild animals~~ *savage beasts*,^a and angels attended him.”

Luke 3:21-23,4:1-2 “When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘*You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.*’ Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.”

As we saw in the earlier section (pages 2-13) Feasts are always tied to the actual events in the plan of God. Also, patterns are repeated in the Bible as in Revelation 11, where the two witnesses who testify for Christ for three and a half years and are killed and then raised three days later.

^a *In the original Greek, Mark’s comment should be translated that Jesus was with “savage beasts.” The Greek word is θηρίον {thā-rē'-on} and is the same word used to describe “the beast of Revelation.” The word is almost always mentioned in a destructive context. To me this indicates that the Father allowed the threat of these menacing predators (possibly indwelt by demons) to be part of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness.*

They can easily be identified as a type of Christ's earlier 3½ year ministry followed by His resurrection after three days.

Between Passover and the Day of Atonement are six months therefore between the Day of Atonement 26 AD and Passover 30 AD are three and a half years.

Both Matthew Henry and A.R. Faussett taught that Jesus' ministry was three and a half years:

Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, Commentary, Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (1871), THE BOOK OF DANIEL, Commentary by A. R. FAUSSETT, CHAPTER 9 "Jesus died in the middle of the last week, A.D. 30. His prophetic life lasted three and a half years;"

Matthew Henry, Commentary On The Whole Bible, (1706-1714), Commentary on Daniel 9 "He shall make strong the testament to the many; the last seven, or the last week, yea, half that seven, or half that week (namely, the latter half, the three years and a half which Christ spent in his public ministry), shall bring to an end sacrifice and oblation."

In Revelation we see that the ministry of the two witnesses was three and a half years long:

Revelation 11:1-12 "I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, 'Go and measure the temple of God and the altar and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for **42 months**. And I will give power to my two witnesses, and **they will prophesy for 1,260 days**, clothed in sackcloth.' These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, 'Come up here.' And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on."

When Jesus Christ announced the beginning of his ministry at Nazareth, he made a comparison to the three-and-a-half-year ministry of Elijah during the drought.

Luke 4:25-26 “I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for **three and a half years** and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon.”

Also, there is the inference of the following passages. In Luke 13 Christ told the parable of the fig tree.

Luke 13:6-9 “Then he told this parable: ‘A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So, he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

If the vineyard is Israel and the master of the vineyard is Christ, which I believe is the clear assumption, then there had been three years which the master had come looking for fruit. The first time was at the first Passover recorded in John 2:13. At the time that Jesus speaks these words the third Passover of His ministry had just been passed (Luke 9). At the fourth Passover the following events took place.

Matthew 21:19 “Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, ‘May you never bear fruit again!’ Immediately the tree withered.”

Mark 11:12-14 “The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, ‘May no one ever eat fruit from you again.’” ----- **Mark 11:19-21** “When evening came, they went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, ‘Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!’”

The clear implication is that four Passovers occurred during the ministry of Christ, that it was three years plus the time it took for the events from John 1 through 2:13, which would be about three and a half years.

A question which throws light on the scene of the Baptism, of Jesus is: Where did it take place? We know from Matthew 3:13 and Mark 1:9 that Jesus was baptized in the Jordan. But, where on the Jordan? The Jordan in ancient times and even today is not the gently flowing stream between two grassy banks which I often used to imagine it to be. Below Beth Shan (Scythopolis) the Jordan is a harsh and inhospitable place. There is really only one place to cross between the ford at Scythopolis and the Dead Sea. It is at the Fords of the Jordan about six miles from Jericho. This was the road that most of the pilgrims to Jerusalem coming from the points north, south, or east would take to the Feast of Tabernacles and the Day of Atonement. Those from Egypt, Galilee, Syria, or Babylon would take that road and cross at that ford. What better place for John

the Baptist to set up to reach a vast number of Jews and baptize. It was not off the beaten path as I had imagined it, but right astride it! At that time of the year it was the end of the dry season, and the flow of the river was vastly reduced from the raging torrent it became during rainy season and particularly at its height at Passover. As such it was also ideal for baptisms. Furthermore, it was a place which had enormous significance, both historical and prophetic. It was the place where Jesus' namesake Joshua,^a crossed the Jordan with the Jews into the Promised Land. It was the place where the waters of judgment stood up in a heap back to Adam^b as the Ark of the Covenant (the Ark symbolizes Jesus) stood in the middle of the river as twelve stones were taken out. Twelve stones were taken out of waters of judgement. Something had to replace them. They were eventually replaced by the Rock, who was the stone the builders rejected (Joshua 3:14-4:18). Jesus' Baptism there fulfilled a prophetic shadow that was 1500 years old.^{c d}

So, if we accept the Day of Atonement as the day of the Lord's baptism, this was the scene. John had been baptizing at the fords of the Jordan about six miles from Jericho. The spot was on one of the main highways in the Middle East, where many of the pilgrims and travelers on their way to and from Jerusalem journeyed. The Day of Atonement was a Sabbath of Sabbaths on which travel was forbidden. Although the pilgrims on the way to the Feast of Tabernacles, which started in five days would resume on the next day, on that day there would have been no Jews traveling on this day, except for Jesus who always did the work of the true Temple and true High Priest on the Sabbath, even as the priests at the Temple did the work of the shadow Temple on the Sabbath. John, who never left the desert, was probably alone, without even his disciples who probably went up for the Day of Atonement at the Temple in Jerusalem, twenty miles away. In such circumstances, John the Baptist alone witnessed the miracle of Heaven opening and the Father speaking! This explains why when Jesus came back from the desert after his temptation, John the Baptist had to point out Jesus to John and Andrew as the one about whom he had been talking (John 1:36-37). This sign that God gave only to John from Heaven was the basis of John's testimony to Jesus' Messiahship. It was also the sign that the Pharisees and Sadducees always said they wanted Jesus to produce for them! (Matthew 12:38, Matthew 16:1, Mark 8:11, Luke 11:16, Luke 11:29, John 2:18, John 6:30)

The fact that the location of this baptism was the very same spot where Joshua (remember Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua) and the Ark (which is the symbolic representation of Jesus) crossed the Jordan in Joshua 3 and 4 helps make it clear that that event was a prophetic shadow of this.

^a "Jesus" is the Greek rendering of the name Hebrew name "Joshua."

^b Adam was the name of a place never mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Clearly it was meant to refer figuratively to Adam's original sin.

^c Interestingly enough, the day the Ark stood in the Jordan River was the 10th of Nisan, the day the Lamb was to be selected for Passover Sacrifice (Exodus 12:3).

^d See Appendix 2

After the Baptism of John

We know that Jesus spent forty days in the Wilderness without food and water. The “Wilderness” was the Sinai desert,^a where the Jews wandered with Moses for forty years. It certainly is not the Wilderness of Judea, since the term “the Wilderness” every other place in scripture refers to the Sinai. When the Wilderness of Judea is meant, it is called the Wilderness of Judea. I believe it is likely that the actual 40 days took place at the same place where Israel was tempted. It was the same place where both Moses and Elijah spoke to the LORD. It was at Mt. Sinai in the Horeb mountains (1 Kings 19:9, Exodus.33:22). If that was the case, then it is possible that Jesus’ 40 days started when He got to Mt. Sinai like Moses. Or it is possible that His 40 days started on the way like Elijah. Either way, after He was finished, it took time to travel back to Bethabara beyond the Jordan where John was baptizing. Bethabara was not on the Jordan, but on one of the smaller streams that ran into the Jordan from the hills east of the river. Why was John baptizing there? Because it was at least early November, if not later, and the winter rains would have started causing the Jordan at the Fords of the Jordan to rise to levels which were dangerous for Baptism. During the fall and winter rains, the Jordan raised considerably.

He came all the way back to Galilee, went to Cana and Capernaum and Nazareth and started His ministry. After about three or four months He then set out through Galilee to Judea.

The First Passover of Jesus’ Ministry

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1731018, Day of week: Wednesday, Gregorian calendar: 7 April, 27 AD, Jewish calendar: 14 Nisan 3787

He went to Passover in Jerusalem. 14 Nisan 27 AD. Besides its obvious relation to the date of his Baptism, this date is also supported by the following facts. According to the article on Herod the Great in Wikipedia, Josephus reported that Herod’s reign started in 37 BC but also reported facts that may have made it as late as 36 BC:

“After three years of conflict, Herod and the Romans finally captured Jerusalem and Herod sent Antigonus for execution to Marc Antony. Herod took the role as sole ruler of Judea and the title of basileus (Βασιλεύς, "king") for himself, ushering in the Herodian Dynasty and ending the Hasmonean Dynasty. Josephus reports this as being in the year of the consulship of Agrippa and Gallus (37 BCE), but also says that it was exactly 27 years after Jerusalem fell to Pompey, which would indicate 36 BCE.”

^a See my paper “Notes on the Route of the Exodus” or my Lessons on the Book of Exodus where I show that the Biblical Mt. Sinai is in the mountain range just west of Ha’il, Saudi Arabia in the north central Arabian Peninsula.

According to Josephus, the construction of Herod's Temple was started in the eighteenth year of Herod the Great's reign:

Antiquities of the Jews, Book XV, Chapter 11, Verse 1 "AND now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign, and after the acts already mentioned, undertook a very great work, that is, to build of himself the temple of God"

Although it was not to be completed for another 36 years, according to the Bible, on the occasion of this visit, the Jews told Jesus, the Temple had been under construction for forty-six years:

John 2:20 "The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?'"

Since neither Josephus nor the Jews in the above passages were exactly precise, depending on whether we take 37 BC or 36 BC as the starting point of Herod's reign we can only work that out to either 26 AD or 27 AD ^a which significantly matches this Chronology, thus adding historical and Biblical support for it. I have taken 36 BC as the starting point. You can see my calculations below:

^a Remember, when you go from BC to AD you lose a year. From a date in 1 BC to the same date in 1 AD is one year not two.

Event	DATE	YEAR of REIGN	YEAR of CONSTRUCTION
Herod made King	37 BC		
	36 BC	1st year	
	35 BC	2nd year	
	34 BC	3rd year	
	33 BC	4th year	
	32 BC	5th year	
	31 BC	6th year	
	30 BC	7th year	
	29 BC	8th year	
	28 BC	9th year	
	27 BC	10th year	
	26 BC	11th year	
	25 BC	12th year	
	24 BC	13th year	
	23 BC	14th year	
	22 BC	15th year	
Temple Built	21 BC	16th year	
	20 BC	17th year	
	19 BC	18th year	1st year
	18 BC		2nd year
	17 BC		3rd year
	16 BC		4th year
	15 BC		5th year
	14 BC		6th year
	13 BC		7th year
	12 BC		8th year
	11 BC		9th year
	10 BC		10th year
	9 BC		11th year
	8 BC		12th year
	7 BC		13th year
	6 BC		14th year
	5 BC		15th year
	4 BC		16th year
	3 BC		17th year
	2 BC		18th year
	1 BC		19th year
	1 AD		20th year
	2 AD		21st year
	3 AD		22nd year
	4 AD		23rd year
	5 AD		24th year
	6 AD		25th year
	7 AD		26th year
	8 AD		27th year
	9 AD		28th year
10 AD		29th year	
11 AD		30th year	
12 AD		31st year	
13 AD		32nd year	
14 AD		33rd year	
15 AD		34th year	
16 AD		35th year	
17 AD		36th year	
18 AD		37th year	
19 AD		38th year	
20 AD		39th year	
21 AD		40th year	
22 AD		41st year	
23 AD		42nd year	
24 AD		43rd year	
25 AD		44th year	
26 AD		45th year	
Jesus visited Temple	27 AD		46th year

After the Passover of 27 AD

Jesus must have ministered in Judea for nine or ten months. Why? We know that when he finally returned to Galilee through Samaria it was four months before the harvest. That would have meant the Samaritan visit must have been in either January or February in one of the years following the Passover of 27 AD which had occurred on April 7. This is established by what Jesus told His disciples during the trip through Samaria:

John 4:35 “Do not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.”

The time of year is also indicated by the fact that at that time John was baptizing (John 3:23) at Salim west of Jordan and south of Beth Shan (Scythopolis) on the road that would have been the busiest route to Jerusalem at that time, because it would have allowed travelers to avoid crossing the Jordan, flooded to impassability by the late winter and early spring floods.^a The question is, what year was it? The following year, or the year after that? 28 or 29 AD.

Between that Samaritan visit and the next Passover recorded in scripture was much of his Galilean ministry. We know that that the next Passover recorded in the Gospels was 29 AD, when he fed the five thousand (see next section). If the January/February visit to Samaria was in 29 AD, it would have left no more than a month and a half to accomplish all the events of Matthew 4–14 besides the trip to Jerusalem for the unnamed feast of John 5:1. That is not plausible, therefore we have to conclude that the Samaritan trip was in 28 AD, and he had been in Judea for a little more than three or four months under a year during the first part of his ministry.

Feast of Purim of 29 AD

I will show that the date according to various calendar systems was:

Day of week: Wednesday-Thursday, Gregorian calendar: 14-15 February, 29 AD, Jewish calendar: 14-15 Adar 3789

Some have argued that the unnamed feast of John 5:1 was the Passover of 28 AD. However, it is my belief that the Passover of 28 AD wasn't mentioned in the Gospels. It would have occurred too shortly after His return to Galilee from Judea. The Passover of 28 AD was one of two Passovers that Jesus stayed out of Jerusalem during His public ministry. Edersheim argued that the feast recorded in John 5:1 was the Feast of Purim. I agree with him. However, since the Feast of Purim always preceded Passover by one month, if it was the Feast of Purim, it must have been the Feast of Purim of 29 AD because if it was the Feast of Purim in 28 AD it would have interrupted His Galilean ministry just after it had gotten started.

^a *1 Chronicles 12:15* “It was they who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its banks,”

Passover of 29 AD

Since we have already established that the was 29 AD, the computer shows that since Passover is always on the Jewish Calendar date of 14 Nisan, the date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1731756, Day of week: Saturday, Gregorian calendar: 14 April, 29 AD, Jewish calendar: 14 Nisan 3789

Below are the verses from scripture that have to do with Passover in 29 AD:

John 6:1-10 “Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he had performed on the sick. Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. **The Jewish Passover Feast was near.** When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. Philip answered him, ‘Eight months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!’ Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’ Jesus said, ‘*Have the people sit down.*’ There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them.”

Matthew 14:13-22 “When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” Jesus replied, ‘*They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.*’ ‘We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,’ they answered. ‘*Bring them here to me,*’ he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.”

Mark 6:30-44 “The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, ‘Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.’ So, they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So, he began teaching them many things. By this time, it was late in the day, so his

disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” But he answered, ‘You give them something to eat.’ They said to him, ‘That would take eight months of a man’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?’ ‘How many loaves do you have?’ he asked. ‘Go and see.’ When they found out, they said, ‘Five--and two fish.’ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So, they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.”

Luke 9:10-17 “Then he took them with him, and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God and healed those who needed healing. Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, ‘Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.’ He replied, ‘You give them something to eat.’ They answered, ‘We have only five loaves of bread and two fish--unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.’ (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, ‘Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each.’ The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.”

Feast of Tabernacles and Afterward in Jerusalem 29 AD (Gospel of John 7 through 10)

We have already established the fact that this was 29 AD. According to scripture, the Feast of Tabernacles was to begin the 15th day of the seventh month:

Leviticus 23:33-24 “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days.’”

The seventh month was called Tishri. The 15th of Tishri and the eight following days which constituted the Feast in 29 AD according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1731934 - 1731941, Day of week: Tuesday to Tuesday, Julian calendar: 9 -16 October, 29 AD, **Jewish calendar: 15-22 Tishri** 3789. Below is a table showing the days of the feast. I have also included the four following days as they are also indicated in the scriptural record of John’s Gospel.

Julian day number	Day of week	Gregorian - (modern civil calendar)	Jewish calendar	Day of the Feast	Events
1731934	Tuesday	9 October, 29 AD	15 Tishri	1 st	
1731935	Wednesday	10 October, 29 AD	16 Tishri	2 nd	
1731936	Thursday	11 October, 29 AD	17 Tishri	3 rd	
1731937	Friday	12 October, 29 AD	18 Tishri	4 th	
1731938	Saturday	13 October, 29 AD	19 Tishri	5 th	Halfway through Jesus went up. John 7:14
1731939	Sunday	14 October, 29 AD	20 Tishri	6 th	
1731940	Monday	15 October, 29 AD	21 Tishri	7 th	
1731941	Tuesday	16 October, 29 AD	22 Tishri	8 th	John 7:37 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.” John 8:1-11 Woman taken in adultery.
1731942	Wednesday	17 October, 29 AD	23 Tishri		
1731943	Thursday	18 October, 29 AD	24 Tishri		
1731944	Friday	19 October, 29 AD	25 Tishri		
1731945	Saturday	20 October, 29 AD	26 Tishri		John 8:1-11 The Blind Man Healed on a Sabbath

Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem – 29 AD (Gospel of John 10:22-39)

According to Jewish tradition the Feast of Dedication was to commence on the 25th day of the ninth month which was called Kislev. It was to last eight days. It had been established to celebrate the rededication and purification of the Temple on that date in 164 BC after it had been defiled by Antiochus IV three years before. The date according to the various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1732003, Day of week: Monday, Gregorian calendar: 17 December, 29 AD, **Jewish calendar: 25 Kislev 3789**

Julian day number	Day of week	Gregorian - (modern civil calendar)	Jewish calendar	Day of the Feast	Events
1732003	Monday	17 December, 29 AD	25 Kislev	1 st	
1732004	Tuesday	18 December, 29 AD	26 Kislev	2 nd	
1732005	Wednesday	19 December, 29 AD	27 Kislev	3 rd	
1732006	Thursday	20 December, 29 AD	28 Kislev	4 th	
1732007	Friday	21 December, 29 AD	29 Kislev	5 th	
1732008	Saturday	22 December, 29 AD	30 Kislev	6 th	
1732009	Sunday	23 December, 29 AD	1 Tevet	7 th	
1732010	Monday	24 December, 29 AD	2 Tevet	8 th	

John 10:22-39 “Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon’s Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly.” Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?” “We are not stoning you for any of these,” replied the Jews, “but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’? If he called them ‘gods,’ to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken-- what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp.

**Presentation of Jesus Christ as King
His Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday 30 AD
Matthew 21:1-ff., Mark 11:1-ff., Luke 19:29-ff., and John 12:12-ff.**

We have already established that the year was 30 AD. The Sunday before the Passover in 30 AD according to the various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1732107, Day of week: Sunday, Gregorian calendar: 31 March, 30 AD, Jewish calendar: 11 Nisan 3790

This event had been prophesied in Daniel about 550 years before:

Daniel 9:24-26 “Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary.”

You will notice that the timeline on this prophecy was to begin when the decree went forth that Jerusalem would be rebuilt with streets and a trench (not a wall). This ending of the timeline of this prophecy was when the Messiah would come to Jerusalem as King. That prophesied day was Palm Sunday during which Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey as prophesied by Zechariah:

Zechariah 9:9 “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

The key question is: “When did the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem with streets and a trench go forth?” Since the publication of Sir Robert Anderson’s book, The Coming Prince in 1894, his interpretation of this passage has been the generally accepted one. His interpretation was that the decree in question was contained in the letters of Artaxerxes which Nehemiah took with him to back to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 2:1-5). This occurred in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (445 BC). Below are the passages in Nehemiah which shed light on whether Anderson’s conclusion was reliable.

First, there is occasion of the decree:

Nehemiah 1:1-4 “The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about

Jerusalem. They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province ^a are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” When I heard these things, I sat down and wept.

To understand the report that Nehemiah was reacting to one must read Ezra 4:6-23. It described the events that led up to the report that Nehemiah heard in Persia. He wasn't reacting to the original destruction of the wall some 140 years before, when the Babylonians had destroyed Jerusalem. He was reacting to the destruction just months before which was described in Ezra:

Ezra 4:6-23 At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes, they lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes. The letter was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language. Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows: Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary, together with the rest of their associates--the judges and officials over the men from Tripolis, Persia, Erech and Babylon, the Elamites of Susa, and the other people whom the great and honorable Ashurbanipal deported and settled in the city of Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates. (This is a copy of the letter they sent him.) To King Artaxerxes, From your servants, the men of Trans-Euphrates: The king should know that the Jews who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations. Furthermore, the king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and the royal revenues will suffer. Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king, so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that this city is a rebellious city, troublesome to kings and provinces, a place of rebellion from ancient times. That is why this city was destroyed. We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates. The king sent this reply: To Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary and the rest of their associates living in Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates: Greetings. The letter you sent us has been read and translated in my presence. I issued an order and a search was made, and it was found that this city has a long history of revolt against kings and has been a place of rebellion and sedition. Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over the whole of Trans-Euphrates, and taxes, tribute and duty were paid to them. Now issue an order to these men to stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order. Be careful not to neglect this matter. Why let this threat grow, to the detriment of the royal interests? As soon as the copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum and Shimshai the secretary and their associates, they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop.

Nehemiah had to be reacting to the above events. The parts of the wall that had been destroyed had evidently originally been started by Ezra under the authority of the decree of Artaxerxes

^a The province of Judea.

which had been given to him. It was that decree by which Ezra had originally ordered the construction of streets and a trench.

Below is that decree as described in Ezra:

Ezra 7:6-22 - Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him. Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. **Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king.**^a He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel. This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest and teacher, a man learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD for Israel: Artaxerxes, king of kings, To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven: Greetings. Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who wish to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand. Moreover, you are to take with you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem. **You and your brother Jews may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God.**^b Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you may have occasion to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury. Now I, King Artaxerxes, order all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you-- up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit.

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes. Evidently, originally, he had focused his attention on the Temple. It seems that it wasn't until four years later that he issued the decree about streets and a trench which was part of Daniel's prophecy. Certainly, the building of the rudimentary defense of a trench around the city must have seemed reasonable to Ezra. It would protect the Temple and its treasures from large bands of bandits who might otherwise ride right through the city. It would also serve to protect the pilgrims who came to the Temple for the

^a *About 458 BC*

^b *This seems to have been the authorization Ezra used when he "rebuilt Jerusalem with streets and a trench" (Daniel 9:25) and built the walls and gates that were stopped (Ezra 4:7-24) and destroyed (Nehemiah 1:2-4).*

feasts. It would seem to be authorized under the phrase: “do whatever seems best.” Evidently it took them a while to get to the building of the gates. It seems that Artaxerxes was taken by surprise by the report of the enemies of the Jews recorded in Ezra 4. However, he had only ordered that the construction be stopped. He had probably originally intended the construction to be stopped until he could look into the matter. His orders had been exceeded and the construction of the walls had not only been stopped, but the gates and whatever walls that had been built had been destroyed.

When Nehemiah got word of the destruction which we read earlier in Nehemiah 1 his grief was noted by Artaxerxes. It is recorded in Nehemiah 2:

Nehemiah 2:1-8 “**In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes,**^a when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.” I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and **its gates have been destroyed by fire?**” The king said to me, “What is it you want?” Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.”^b Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time. I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king’s forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for **the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall** and for the residence I will occupy?” And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.

You will notice that Nehemiah’s main request was to restore the gates of the city and to build new city walls. There is no mention of “streets and a trench.” Daniel’s prophetic clock on the coming of Messiah had started some nine years previous to the events in Nehemiah 1 and 2 when Ezra had started the building the defenses of the city with a trench and included the construction of streets.

Daniel’s prophecy called for 483 years from the decree to restore to the coming of the Anointed One (the Messiah). From 445 BC, the date of Nehemiah’s decree, to Christ’s coming to Jerusalem as ruler, in 30 AD was 474 years. The discrepancy of 9 years was accounted for by

^a *About 445 BC.*

^b *To appreciate what Nehemiah was doing, it must be remembered that to be cupbearer to the King was to be one of the chief ministers in the most powerful empire in the world. He was asking to be relieved from that to go and supervise the building of a wall in one of the less significant of the 120 provinces of Persia. Also, he had no idea if the Jews would even welcome him.*

Anderson by asserting that Daniel was talking about “so called” prophetic years ^a of 360 days. If that were so then the 483 “prophetic years” would work out to 476 solar years. The resulting two-year discrepancy was taken care of by moving Christ’s crucifixion to 32 AD, which we have shown in this paper as manifestly wrong. However, the whole problem can be resolved by re-examining the question of when the original decree that started the clock was issued. We have seen in Ezra 4:7-24 that sometime before the events of Nehemiah 2:1-5 some of the leading officials of the region of Trans-Euphrates (the region west of the Euphrates which included Syria, Samaria, and Judea) sent a letter to Artaxerxes complaining that the Jews were in the process of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Because of this letter Artaxerxes (or one of his representatives) sent a letter authorizing those officials to compel the Jews to stop construction. They followed up by going to Jerusalem and, not only stopping the construction by force, but destroying what they had already built. It is obvious that the Jews had begun re-construction of Jerusalem on some authority. Did they do it without regard to Persian authority? We found the answer in Ezra 7:1-28. In the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458 BC), Ezra arrived in Jerusalem with supreme authority over all the people of Trans-Euphrates region and to do with their treasure what seemed best to them. It is clear to me that it must have been Ezra who issued the original decree to rebuild Jerusalem with streets and a trench! We must suppose that they had finished the trenches and that they had built the gates with whatever walls would tie to the trench defenses. The original decree must have been about 454 BC. That would have started Daniel’s prophetic clock which reached its mark in 30 AD, 483 regular years later. Some time in the next four or five years after that, the letter was sent to Artaxerxes which resulted in the destruction which Nehemiah lamented about before Artaxerxes in Nehemiah 2:1-5.

^a *Although years of 360 days do occur in the Bible they are in reference to the Flood and the last part of the Tribulation. We know from Babylonian records that the length of a month (one orbit of the Moon around the earth) has been 29½ days for at least the last 2800 years. However, during the Tribulation, we know that a catastrophe related to the moon occurs, which might easily cause its orbit to lengthen. During the time of the flood a similar disaster might have affected the moon which had an impact on both the sea coming out of its bounds and the length of its orbit. There are also persuasive arguments that the earth and moon may have changed their relative orbit lengths during Isaiah’s miracle (Isaiah 38:8) of the sun going back 10° which happened about 2800 years ago.*

Crucifixion of Jesus Christ Preparation day for Passover 30 AD

We have already established that the year was 30 AD. The Preparation Day for the Passover was the 24 hours before the twilight on 14 Nisan when the Passover Lamb was to be slain according to the Law of Moses. In 30 AD the 14th day of Nisan, according to the various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1732110, Day of week: Wednesday, Gregorian calendar: 3 April, 30 AD, Jewish calendar: 14 Nisan 3790 ^a

If Jesus' ministry included four Passovers, as I have established, then the ministry of Jesus could have been no less than three years and three months to include the four Passovers and the trip from His Baptism at the Jordan to the wilderness of Mount Sinai, back to Galilee, and back to Jerusalem in time for the first Passover of 27 AD. If my earlier hypothesis about the date of His baptism by John the Baptist is right, it actually lasted three and a half years, from the Day of Atonement in 26 AD to Passover in 30 AD. There are some that contend that Jesus' ministry was only two years and some months, but I believe I have shown this is impossible. As to the day of the week, as I show in Appendix 3, even the internal evidence of the Bible indicates a Wednesday crucifixion. As to the year, everything has led us to a 30 AD date. The Jewish calendar tells us that in 30 AD, the Twilight sacrifice which was the Passover happened on a Wednesday. Those who argue for a Friday crucifixion could only be correct if it happened in 33 AD (which is too late considering we know that Christ was born at least two months before Passover 4 BC), or 26 AD (which is too early considering that Pilate was not appointed Procurator in Judea till 26 AD and we know that according to the scripture he was already appointed when Jesus started his ministry).^b

^a All the dates were derived from <http://www.genealogy.org/~scottlee/calconvert.cgi>. This web site is no longer operating. However, I have found the following which are currently available: <http://www.uwm.edu/~corre/calendar.html>.

<http://www.shiva.com/learning-center/resources/date-conversion/>

^b In the sixth century AD the Roman Pope decided it was not seemly for the Christian Church to depend on the Jewish calendar to celebrate the Passover death of Jesus Christ. He commissioned a learned priest named Dionysius Exiguus to determine when the original death of Jesus Christ was for the purpose of devising a system by which the Church could announce the time of Easter. As a result of his researches, he picked 33 AD as the year. It was the only year he could pick and stay with a Friday crucifixion date. In those days the bulk of theological opinion was that, since Jesus was nearly 30 when He was baptized, and He had a public ministry of about 2 ½ years, He was crucified when He was in His 33rd year. Thus, Dionysius Exiguus arrived at a birth year of 1 AD. Unfortunately, as I have shown earlier, that is impossible, because Herod died in 4 BC. I suspect that Dionysius Exiguus was forced into this error, because otherwise he would have had to acknowledge that Jesus was not crucified on Friday, as had been hardened into a tradition. Even today, it is very contentious argument, that many better-informed scholars are not willing to undertake.

Also, a date of Christ's Passover being in 30 AD lines up with the passage in Ezekiel 4 which describes the two sieges of Jerusalem (the Babylonian one in 586 BC and the Roman one in 70 AD).

Ezekiel 4:1-7 “Now, son of man, take a clay tablet, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the house of Israel. “Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the house of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So, for 390 days you will bear the sin of the house of Israel. **“After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the house of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her.”**

Ezekiel was to lie down for each day of Judah's sin (it was Judah that came back after the Babylonian captivity), which has to be interpreted as the 40 years of rejection of their Messiah. By no coincidence, the Romans, according to Josephus, ^a began their siege on Passover 70 AD, exactly 40 years to the day after the crucifixion of Christ.

Burial of Jesus Christ Feast of Unleavened Bread 30 AD

The Feast of Unleavened bread started on the 15th of Nisan. According to the Law of Moses it was to begin just after the twilight sacrifice of the Passover Lamb on the 14th of Nisan:

Leviticus 23:5-6 “The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast.”

We have already established that the year was 30 AD. In 30 AD that date according to the various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1732111, Day of week: Thursday, Gregorian calendar: 4 April 0030 AD (modern civil calendar), Julian calendar: 6 April 0030 AD (old civil calendar), Jewish calendar: 15 Nisan 3790 (3790/8/15)

^a ***Wars of the Jews, Flavius Josephus, Book V, Chapter 13, Verse 7.*** “*And, indeed, why do I relate these particular calamities? while Manneus, the son of Lazarus, came running to Titus at this very time, and told him that there had been carried out through that one gate, which was entrusted to his care, no fewer than a hundred and fifteen thousand eight hundred and eighty dead bodies, in the interval between the fourteenth day of the month Xanthieus, [Nisan,] when the Romans pitched their camp by the city, and the first day of the month Panemus [Tamuz]”*

The Feast of Unleavened Bread 30 AD started after the second Sundown of the 14th Nisan about 6 PM which was 15th Nisan 30 AD. It was the day the Passover Lamb was eaten. Because of that most Jews call that meal the Passover Feast and call that day Passover. That day was a special Sabbath.^a That was the first Sabbath day of that week. It symbolized the offering of the righteous life of Christ for us as our righteousness.

Resurrection of Jesus Christ Feast of the Firstfruits 30 AD

As we have already established that the year was 30 AD, the day of the Feast of Firstfruits as the first Sunday following the crucifixion is obvious. The date according to various calendar systems was:

Julian day number: 1732114, Day of week: Sunday, Gregorian calendar: 7 April 0030 AD (modern civil calendar), Julian calendar: 9 April 0030 AD (old civil calendar), Jewish calendar: 18 Nisan 3790 (3790/8/18)

Feast of Firstfruits 30 AD

The Feast of Firstfruits is an important type of the fact that Jesus was the firstfruits from the dead.^b It is important that He was raised on the Feast of Firstfruits. However, there were two traditions as to when the Feast of Firstfruits should actually occur. If Christ was crucified on Wednesday 14 Nisan 30 AD, then according to the Jewish custom predominant in that day the Feast of the Firstfruits would have fallen on 16 Nisan or Friday, and Christ was not raised until Sunday. However, there is and was a controversy among the Jews regarding when the Feast of Firstfruits should have been held.

The Feasts of the Lord, Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, pp 75-76 Firstfruits was an early spring feast, the third in the Jewish festive cycle. On the Hebrew calendar, it occurred on the 16th day of Nisan, the first biblical month (March or April), only two days after the beginning of Passover season. Scripture did not specify the actual calendar date of First Fruits, but merely prescribed its time of observance to be “on the day after the Sabbath” (Leviticus 23:11). This led

^a *Exodus 12:15-16* “For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat--that is all you may do.”

^b *1 Corinthians 15:20-23* “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.”

to various interpretations and considerable debate as to which *Sabbath* was in view. The Sadducees, and later the Karaite Jews, understood it to refer to the first weekly Sabbath (Saturday) which occurred during the week of Passover season. However. The word *Sabbath* also designated any holy day on which work was prohibited, no matter on which day of the week it occurred (Leviticus 23:24, 32, 39) the majority opinion, held by the Pharisees, was that the *Sabbath* in question was Nisan 15, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened bread, that day was to be “a holy convocation” (Leviticus 23:7) on which no work was performed. This same description was given to the weekly Sabbath (Lev.23:3) and to holy-day Sabbaths held on other days of the week (Leviticus 23:24-25, 28, 32, 39).

The Sadducees held that the Feast of the Firstfruits should properly be held on the day after the regular Sabbath (Saturday). In 30 AD, or any other year according to that interpretation, the Feast of Firstfruits would have fallen on Sunday, which was the day that Christ was the Firstfruits. Below is the passage that led to the disagreement. Particularly notice the sections in bold font.

Leviticus 23:5-15 The LORD’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD’s Feast of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. For seven days present an offering made to the LORD by fire. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.” The LORD said to Moses, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; **the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath** (*this was known as the Feast of the Firstfruits*). On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect, together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil--an offering made to the LORD by fire, a pleasing aroma--and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin of wine. You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. “**From the day after the Sabbath**, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks.

The Pharisees and their followers celebrated the Feast of the Firstfruits in 30 AD on 16 Nisan, calculating that the 1st Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was the Sabbath Leviticus was talking about, but since we know that the fulfillment of that Feast occurred on Sunday, 18 Nisan 30 AD which was the day in the Seven day feast that was the day after the weekly Sabbath it would appear that the Sadducees were the ones who had correctly interpreted Leviticus. God had the final say in the interpretation.

It should also be noted that the following verse in Matthew, which could have helped to clarify the correct chronology of events, has been universally mistranslated. I have copied five different translations which are all wrong. The first translation is from the NIV.

Matthew 28:1 “After the ~~Sabbath~~ *Sabbaths*, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb”. NIV

You will notice that all the rest of the translations, even from the King James have the same error.

Matthew 28:1 “In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.” KJV

Matthew 28:1 “Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.” NAS

Matthew 28:1 “Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.”

Matthew 28:1 “After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.” NRSV

The Greek original here of the first phrase is:

Ὅψε δὲ σαββάτων τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων.

Translated word by word this is - Ὅψε δὲ “Now after” - σαββάτων “the sabbaths” - τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ “as came the dawn” - εἰς “into” - μίαν “the first” – σαββάτων “of the sabbaths”.

Literally this should be “Now after the sabbaths, as came the dawn into the first of (or after) the sabbaths.”

Both places that the word “sabbath” occurs the Greek is σαββάτων which is the genitive plural form of the word for sabbath. It isn’t σαββάτου which is the genitive singular form of the verb.

The genitive plural σαββάτων occurs in both the Textus Receptus and the Codex Sinaiticus. The correct translation would have made one thing clear. There was more than one Sabbath between the crucifixion of Christ and His resurrection. The first was a special Sabbath on Thursday, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the second was the weekly Sabbath. This was what happened in 30 AD. The second thing that seems to be indicated by the second occurrence of “Sabbaths” is that Matthew recognized that the Sunday Resurrection of Jesus Christ marked the completion of God’s provision and the beginning of a new Sabbath, on Sunday.

This completes the actual accomplished Chronology of the Life of Christ.

Informed Speculation about Dates Yet to Come

We have completed the Chronology of the life of Christ in His First Advent. However, it has to raise the question: If Feast Days and Special Days have been significant in the First Advent will they be significant in His Second Advent? I believe they will, but no one knows for sure. The Bible never says they will, but if we take the past as a pattern of what will happen in the future, we might reasonably expect that they will. In the First Century, before Christ was crucified, it was not at all clear to the Jews that twilight on 14 Nisan (Passover) would be the moment of the greatest event in the history of the world. They didn't understand all the Old Testament prophecies which pointed to when, where, and how the Anointed Savior would accomplish salvation so that He could say "It is finished." Now we are left with the question of "When will the rest of the Feasts be fulfilled. When will the Rapture occur? When will the Millennium begin and when will it end?"

When it comes to foreseeing the possible end times, we are confronted with two scriptures:

Mark 13:24-32 "But in those days, following that distress (*the Great Tribulation*), "the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken." "At that time men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens. "Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.^a Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. "No one knows about that day or hour (*of the Second Coming*), not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

We should be careful to note that says that at that time in 30 AD, before Christ had reassumed the full functions of His deity, not even He knew the Day of the Hour of His 2nd Coming, but the Father did. It doesn't say that He would never know, nor that none but the Father would ever know. Neither does it say that no one would ever know apart from the Father. In fact, from the beginning of the Tribulation, everyone reading Revelation and Daniel will know that the 2nd Coming will occur in seven years. That seems to be what Daniel is saying:

Daniel 12:9 -10 He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

That seems to indicate that although we will never understand fully until the events occur, there is a level of understanding available to those wise in the word. There may be clues in scripture.

^a This verse only applies to the original question about the Temple in Mark 13:2-4.

Certainly, every generation in the age of Christianity has sought for them. They generally have decided that the Second Advent is coming in their generation. So far, they have been wrong.

Still, it is interesting to speculate. Below are some speculative theories. I believe some may turn out to have some merit. Of course, the basic thing we must understand is that the Christian should live every day as if that day is the day when we will see the LORD face to face, whether it is by the Rapture or by our death.

The first and most obvious speculation is about the Rapture of the Church when Christ returns before the Tribulation and takes believers to heaven. The two most prominent prophecies about the Rapture are the following, which are both by Paul:

1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 “According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and **with the trumpet call of God**, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever.”

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, **at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound**, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

You will notice the recurring theme of trumpets in both passages. One of the prominent Feasts of Israel is sometimes called the Feast of Trumpets. It is the next feast after Pentecost which marked the beginning of the Church. This feast occurs on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri) of the Jewish calendar. It usually falls in September, depending on the vagaries of the Jewish calendar. The Old Testament verses related to the Feast of Trumpets are below:

Leviticus 23:23-25 “The LORD said to Moses, ‘Say to the Israelites: ‘On **the first day of the seventh month** you are to have a day of rest, **a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts**. Do no regular work, but present an offering made to the LORD by fire.’”

Deuteronomy 29:1-6 “On **the first day of the seventh month** hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. **It is a day for you to sound the trumpets**. As an aroma pleasing to the LORD, prepare a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you. These are in addition to the monthly and daily burnt

offerings with their grain offerings and drink offerings as specified. They are offerings made to the LORD by fire--a pleasing aroma.”

What better day would there be for the last trump to sound to end the Church age and call us home than the Feast of Trumpets? Thus, many have the opinion that regardless of the question about the year it will happen, the day the Rapture will occur is on the day of the Feast of Trumpets.

The next prophetic event to occur after the Rapture would be the beginning of the Tribulation. There is nothing specifically to say that it couldn't start immediately after the Rapture. However, the Church age didn't start until seven weeks after the crucifixion, and ten days after Christ's ascension. If there is a similar ten-day gap between the Church Age and the beginning of the Tribulation, that would make the day after the Day of Atonement the beginning of the Tribulation. The Day of Atonement is on the tenth day of the seventh month (Tishri) so the day after that would be a ten days gap. We know that the Tribulation will last exactly seven years so the return of Christ for His second ministry would occur on the Day of Atonement seven years after the beginning of the Tribulation. The Day of Atonement was the day that there were two goats chosen. By lot, one was taken out into the desert. We have already discussed the significance of this in the Baptism of Jesus by John. That was the beginning of Jesus' first ministry. By lot the other goat chosen was sacrificed and its blood was taken into the Holy of Holies to atone for the sins of the people. The relevant Old Testament passages are listed below:

Leviticus 16:2-34 “The LORD said to Moses: ‘Tell your brother Aaron not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud over the atonement cover. This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. **He is to cast lots for the two goats--one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat Azazel.**^a Aaron shall bring

^a *The word translated “scapegoat” in Leviticus 16 is azazel – אֲזָזֵל {az-ä-zāl’} The word only appears in this passage and its meaning is uncertain. However, **The Feasts of the Lord, Kevin Howard and Marvin Rosenthal, page 123** says:*

“Some debate exists as to the exact meaning of azazel. Some believe it was a reference to Satan, for in Jewish tradition Azazel was the name of a fallen angel. However, most scholars believe that the word was derived from the Hebrew word azel which carries the idea of ‘escape.’ This line of thought led to calling this goat the ‘scapegoat’ since it escaped death and was instead driven into the wilderness.”

the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat to Azazel. Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover. **“He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been.** He is to do the same for the Tent of Meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. No one is to be in the Tent of Meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel. “Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites. **“When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.** “Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. “The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. “This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work--whether native-born or an alien living among you-- because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. It is a Sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. The priest

If the first meaning is true it would mean that the verse should read “one lot for the LORD and the other for Satan” and would line up perfectly with the fact that Christ's was “led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.”

who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites.’ And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.”

Leviticus 23:26-32 The LORD said to Moses, “**The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement.** Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. Anyone who does not deny himself on that day must be cut off from his people. I will destroy from among his people anyone who does any work on that day. You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your Sabbath.”

Leviticus 29:7-11 “**On the tenth day of this seventh month hold a sacred assembly.** You must deny yourselves and do no work. Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bull prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the sin offering for atonement and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

What better day, for Jesus Christ, the true eternal High Priest to return to Mount Zion for the final atonement of Israel’s sin and rebellion to prepare the way of the Millennium, the last 1000 years promised to Israel. This is particularly clear in the passage on the year of Jubilee.

Leviticus 25:8-14 “Count off seven sabbaths of years--seven times seven years ^a--so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. **Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.** It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan. The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields. “In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to his own property. “If you sell land to one of your countrymen or buy any from him, do not take advantage of each other.

This is the day Paul spoke of in Romans:

^a *Is it more than coincidence that in God’s timetable for Israel, the prophecy of Daniel promises the Lord’s return after seventy sevens, and the Lord’s timetable for Israel provides for the year of jubilee after seven sevens?*

Romans 11:25-27 “I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.’”^a

Also, Joel seems to be speaking of this day in association with the end of the Tribulation.

Joel 2:15 “Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly.”

This is identified with the Day of Atonement because it is both a sacred assembly and fast day, called in Acts “the Fast.”^b

The following passages could be read to indicate that the Day of Atonement is the day the Lord will fulfill His covenant with Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:43 “Rejoice, O nations, with his people, *and let all the angels worship him* ^c for he will avenge the blood of his servants; he will take vengeance on his enemies (*end of the Tribulation*) and make atonement for his land and people.”

Ezekiel 16:60-63 “Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both those who are older than you and those who are younger. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on the basis of my covenant with you. So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. Then, when **I make atonement** for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Ezekiel 36:33 “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: ‘On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.’”^d

^a *Isaiah 59:20,21* “The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD. “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says the LORD. “My Spirit, who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of their descendants from this time on and forever,” says the LORD.

^b Acts 27:9.

^c This phrase is included in Deuteronomy 32:43 in the Septuagint, Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls versions, although it is not in the Torah. Since this phrase is referred to in Hebrews 1:6 as well, the logical conclusion is that it was part of the original autograph of Deuteronomy.

^d This verse seems to confirm that the Lord will return on the Day of Atonement to cleanse his people and then the reconstruction will begin.

Also, the following verse (already quoted above) would seem to indicate that the Day of Atonement will mark the time that Israel will return to their land to reclaim their inheritance.

Leviticus 25:8-10 “Count off seven sabbaths of years--seven times seven years--so that the seven sabbaths of years amount to a period of forty-nine years. Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; **on the Day of Atonement** sound the trumpet throughout your land. Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; **each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan.**

J. Vernon McGee also asserts that the Day of Atonement will be fulfilled at the Second Advent of Christ. He does this by connecting the passage in Zechariah 12:10-14 with the passage in Leviticus 23:27 which calls for afflicting one’s soul on the Day of Atonement. He notes that the Day of Atonement is the only Holy Day in the Bible in which weeping is commanded.

Zechariah 12:10-14 “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him ^a as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son.^b On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be great, like the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.^c The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, and all the rest of the clans and their wives.^d

^a *Matthew 24:30*

^b *From Revelation 1:7 it is clear that this refers to the second coming of Christ.*

^c *Haddad Rimmon was the rock in the Valley of Megiddo where Josiah was killed. 2 Chronicles 35:22-24 “Josiah, however, would not turn away from him, but disguised himself to engage him in battle. He would not listen to what Neco had said at God’s command but went to fight him on the plain of Megiddo. Archers shot King Josiah, and he told his officers, ‘Take me away; I am badly wounded.’ So, they took him out of his chariot, put him in the other chariot he had and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died.”*

Although Jeremiah was talking about Christ some thought Jeremiah was speaking of Josiah in Lamentations 4:19-20 (“Our pursuers were swifter than eagles in the sky; they chased us over the mountains and lay in wait for us in the desert. The LORD’s anointed, our very life breath, was caught in their traps.”) because the lamentation for Christ here was similar to the lamentation for Josiah at his death, because many of the Jews believed that Josiah was God’s anointed. The point for this verse is that the mourning in verse 12 will be for the death of the Messiah which they realize they had caused at His First Advent.

^d *The significance of the mourners listed is that the Messiah came most significantly through the families of David, Nathan, Levi, and Shimei. The mention of the wives is that He came through the woman’s seed. These names represent the three tribes among the Jews (the southern kingdom). David and Nathan represent Judah. Levi represents Levi. Shimei represents Benjamin.*

Leviticus 23:27 “The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and **afflict your souls**, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. Anyone who does not **afflict his soul** on that day must be cut off from his people.

There is another date connected with this. You may remember, that I proved that at the time of Noah’s flood there was a 360-day year and 30-day lunar cycle, or month. The Bible also clearly indicates that these cycles are reestablished at the time of the Tribulation. The following passage establishes the tribulation at seven years.

Daniel 9:25-27 “Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come^a will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. **He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering.** And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

The following passage establishes the first half of the tribulation at forty-two months and 1260 days. I will refer to this passage again shortly.

Revelation 11:1-13 “I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there. But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for **42 months**. And I will give power to my two witnesses,^b and they will prophesy for **1,260 days**,

^a *The beast of Revelation 13:1.*

^b *Though the witnesses are not named in the above passages there are several good reasons to conclude that they are Moses and Elijah*

1. *We know Elijah is coming back before the 2nd Advent of Christ according to the book of Malachi and testimony of Jesus Christ Himself in the Gospels Matthew 17:11, Luke 9:12. If Elijah is not one of the two witnesses described in Revelation, he is not mentioned in Revelation at all. Furthermore, you will notice that Moses is mentioned in the verse before Elijah is mentioned in Malachi 4:4-6*

2. *We know that both Moses and Elijah were revealed with Christ in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and that seems to indicate some special kind of association of the two related to the 2nd Advent of Christ in His glory Matthew 17:2-3, Mark 9:2-4, Luke 9:29-31).*

3. *If you read the accounts of the ends of the lives of Moses and Elijah, we find that no one knows where their bodies are and that both disappeared in the same place.*

End of Moses’ life - Moses disappearance involved a burial service which the Lord arranged and involved a conflict between the Angelic and Demonic forces.

Deuteronomy 34:1-6 Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land--from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it." And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. He buried him in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is.

Jude 1:9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

End of Elijah's life - Similarly Elijah was taken up and his body was never found.

2 Kings 2:1-11 When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to Bethel." But Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So, they went down to Bethel. The company of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "but do not speak of it." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So, they went to Jericho. The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?" "Yes, I know," he replied, "but do not speak of it." Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So, the two of them walked on. Fifty men of the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?" "Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied. "You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours--otherwise not." As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind.

Location of Moses' and Elijah's End - It is interesting to note that some 600 years after Moses was buried somewhere in the foothills east of the Jordan across from Jericho the Lord told Elijah to go from Gilgal (somewhere north of Bethel) to the same area a distance of over sixty miles on foot. The purpose for this was definitely not because that was the closest trunkline of the angelic chariot, but because the place was significant in some other respect.

4. Moses and Elijah are associated with the two witnesses as revealed in Revelation and Zechariah in that they are given four powers (Revelation 11:5-6) associated only with Moses and Elijah.

Revelation 11:5-6 If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up

the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

First power - if anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. Associated with Elijah: 2 Kings 1:9-12

Second power - these men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying. Associated with Elijah: 1 Kings 17:1

Third power - they have power to turn the waters into blood. Associated with Moses: Exodus 7:20

Fourth power - they have power to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Associated with Moses: Exodus Chapters 5-12

5. The time of the power of the two witnesses is the same as the time of Elijah's power over the rain. "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days (three and a half years)" Associated with Elijah: Luke 4:25, James 5:17

6. There is a striking similarity between the message to Elijah at his failure after the threats of Jezebel, and the message in Zechariah which is the witness of the two olive trees.

1 Kings 19:11-12 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

Zechariah 4:5-6 He answered, "Do you not know what these are?" "No, my lord," I replied. So, he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

7. It is worth noting that three men spent forty days of testing on Sinai (also called Horeb and "the Wilderness"), Moses, Elijah and Jesus Christ. Moses and Elijah were shown the presence of God, perhaps as a preview to when they would see Him face to face on Mount Hermon. (Exodus 24:18, 1 Kings 19:8-9, **Matthew 4:1-2** "Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert (literally "the Wilderness" which always refers to the Sinai) to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.")

To me it is very poignant and a testimony of the Lord's unfailing grace, that He took Moses' and Elijah's failures in not appreciating the source of His power and turned them into a triumph. They get to spend three and a half years putting the lesson into action.

8. Also, God tried to show both Moses and Elijah His Glory at Mount Sinai when they were on earth, but couldn't: Exodus 33:18-23, 1 Kings 19:11-13)

9. Both Moses and Elijah crossed over a body of water dry shod: Exodus 14:21-22, 2 Kings 2:8b-9

10. The two witnesses testify in Jerusalem before the fulfillment of the promises to Israel with the establishment of the Kingdom in the Millennium. It would seem only appropriate that the witnesses are both Israelites. This is as opposed to the contention that Enoch, a Gentile, was the other witness. See next item.

clothed in sackcloth.” These are the two olive trees^a and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. These men have power to shut up the sky so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want. Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth. But after the three and a half days a breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on. At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

The following passages establish the second half of the tribulation at three and a half years (“a time, times and half a time”) and 1260 days.

Revelation 12:3-14 “Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on his heads. His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born. She gave birth to a son, a male child, who will rule all the nations with an iron scepter. And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. The woman fled into the desert to a place prepared for her by God, where **she might be taken care of for 1,260 days**. And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: “Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They overcame

11. Many commentators have speculated that Enoch is the second witness along with Elijah. This is based on the fact that both Elijah and Enoch are never recorded as dying. Elijah of course was taken up to heaven in a chariot. Enoch, according to Hebrews 11:5 also never died, and according to Jude 1:14 Enoch prophesied about the Lord’s coming in wrath. This slender connection with Elijah is pretty much the extent of the Biblical justification for picking Enoch. There is also a long (over 1,500 years) non-Biblical tradition of choosing Enoch as the second witness. However, it is also worth noting that the two witnesses are also called the two olive trees in both Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11. The olive tree is usually associated with Israel. Enoch is not a son of Israel.

^a Zechariah 4:3, 4:11

him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where **she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time**, out of the serpent’s reach.

Daniel 7:21-25 “As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom. “He gave me this explanation: ‘The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. He will speak against the Most High and oppress his saints and try to change the set times and the laws. The saints will be handed over to him for **a time, times and half a time.**”

The seven-year period of the Tribulation is clearly 84 months, or 2520 days. Since $84 \times 30 = 2520$, clearly my case about the lunar and solar cycles being reestablished at the ancient norms is confirmed. How this happens is anybody’s guess. My favorite guess is a massive meteor strike on the earth or the moon, either of which could accomplish it. There is a verse in Isaiah which sounds like it might be speaking about this:

Isaiah 13:13 “Therefore I will make the heavens tremble; and the earth will shake from its place at the wrath of the LORD Almighty, in the day of his burning anger.”

Also, the passages in Revelation that seem to be speaking of just such a meteor seem to support this:

Revelation 8:10-11a “The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water-- the name of the star is Wormwood.”

Revelation 8:8 “The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea.”

So now we return to the other prophetic date in the Tribulation. We know from Revelation 1:1-13 printed above, that after 1260 days the two witnesses (Elijah and Moses) will be killed and lie in the streets of Jerusalem for three and a half days and then come to life and ascend to Heaven. If the Tribulation starts on the 11th day of the seventh month, then the Moses and Elijah will ascend on the 14th day of the first month, Passover!

The last prophetic date is the beginning of the Millennium. Again, we could argue that it starts the next day after the end of the Tribulation. Or there could be a short interim. I go for the latter, because that coincides with the Feast of Tabernacles five days later on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Below are the relevant verses:

Leviticus 23:34-43 “Say to the Israelites: ‘On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD’s Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. For seven days present offerings made to the LORD by fire, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. It is the closing assembly; do no regular work. (“These are the LORD’s appointed feasts, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing offerings made to the LORD by fire--the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD’s Sabbaths and in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.)” “So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. Live in booths for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in booths so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.””

Deuteronomy 29:12-39 “On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days. Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With each of the thirteen bulls prepare a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil; with each of the two rams, two-tenths; and with each of the fourteen lambs, one-tenth. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. On the second day prepare twelve young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings. On the third day prepare eleven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. On the fourth day prepare ten bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. On the fifth day prepare nine bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified.

Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. ““On the sixth day prepare eight bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. On the seventh day prepare seven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bulls, rams and lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. On the eighth day hold an assembly and do no regular work. Present an offering made by fire as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. With the bull, the ram and the lambs, prepare their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering. In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, prepare these for the LORD at your appointed feasts: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings.”

Ezekiel 45:23-25 “Every day during the seven days of the Feast he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the LORD, and a male goat for a sin offering. He is to provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull and an ephah for each ram, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. During the seven days of the Feast, which begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, he is to make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings and oil.”

The following passage also seems to be speaking of the establishment of the tabernacle of the Lord as bringing in Millennial blessings.

Leviticus 26:6-12 (ASV) “And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. **And I will set my tabernacle among you:** and my soul shall not abhor you. **And I will walk among you,** and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.”

Most persuasive of all the passages that the Millennium will start on the Feast of Tabernacles is the following passage from Zechariah which describes the Millennium:

Zechariah 14:16 “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.”

The following passage seems to indicate that after the great ingathering of the beginning of the Millennium, at least figuratively, the moon will never wane again. We know that the Feast of Tabernacles occurs at the full of the moon, the 15th, so that would fit.

Isaiah 60:20a “Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more;”

Also, there is the connection that the Feast of Tabernacles, which was on the 15th of Tishri (Tishri was called Ethanim – “flowing rivers” before the captivity) was the occasion on which the Lord made the offer to let them come to him and drink.

John 7:37-38 “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.”

The following passage could be taken to indicate that the abomination that causes desolation occurs one month before the two witnesses are killed since that event is 1260 days before the end of the tribulation and the abomination occurs 1290 days before the end.

Daniel 12:11-12 “From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.”

All this section is clearly speculation, but it is fun, However, I wouldn't be surprised if it turned out to be close to the actual timing. Which year is of course the question most people want to know. Just live as if it is this year!

Appendix 1

The Temple--Its Ministry and Services, Alfred Edersheim, The New Moon - And this brings up yet another difficulty. The Jews calculated the month according to the phases of the moon, each month consisting of either twenty-nine or thirty days, and beginning with the appearance of the new moon. But this opened a fresh field of uncertainty. It is quite true that everyone might observe for himself the appearance of a new moon. But this would again partly depend on the state of the weather. Besides, it left an authoritative declaration of the commencement of a month unsupplied. And yet not only was the first of every month to be observed as 'New Moon's Day,' but the feasts took place on the 10th, 15th, or other day of the month, which could not be accurately determined without a certain knowledge of its beginning. To supply this want the Sanhedrim sat in the 'Hall of Polished Stones' to receive the testimony of credible witnesses that they had seen the new moon. To encourage as many as possible to come forward on so important a testimony, these witnesses were handsomely entertained at the public expense. If the new moon had appeared at the commencement of the 30th day--which would correspond to our evening of the 29th, as the Jews reckoned the day from evening to evening--the Sanhedrim declared the previous month to have been one of twenty-nine days, or 'imperfect.' Immediately thereon men were sent to a signal-station on the Mount of Olives, where beacon-fires were lit and torches waved, till a kindling flame on a hill in the distance indicated that the signal had been perceived. Thus, the tidings, that this was the new moon, would be carried from hill to hill, far beyond the boundaries of Palestine, to those of the dispersion, 'beyond the river.' Again, if credible witnesses had not appeared to testify to the appearance of the new moon on the evening of the 29th, the next evening, or that of the 30th, according to *our* reckoning, was taken as the commencement of the new month, in which case the previous month was declared to have been one of thirty days, or '*full*.' It was ruled that a year should neither have less than four, nor more than eight such full months of thirty days.

Appendix 2 The Jordan River Valley

Zondervan, New Atlas of the Bible, Carl G. Rasmussen, 1989

Although the Jordan Valley stretches only some 65 miles from the sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, the actual length of the meandering river is approximately 135 miles. The width of the river varies considerably from season to season and in various places, but at the Allenby bridge, 7.5 miles north of the Dead Sea, its width fluctuates from 72 to 115 feet. Early explorers report that at flood stage certain portion of the river reached a width of almost 1 mile. The depth of the Jordan River at the Allenby Bridge varies from 4.3 feet to 13 feet from one season to another. During the winter and spring, especially from January through March, the highest water levels are reached.

In spite of the Jordan's meandering, its gradient is relatively steep, and the current is strong. Travel up and down the River is almost impossible because the usually shallow, but swift waters and the numerous rapids. The Lynch Expedition encountered some twenty-seven major rapids during their trip along the length of the Jordan in 1848. There is no evidence from Biblical times any bridges were build across the river. From the mention of "fords" in the Bible, it seems evident that these shallow areas were sought out as the most convenient places of crossing. Swamps along the banks, swift currents, and muddy or very rocky bottoms can make the crossing treacherous as one wades, swims or attempts to ride an animal across the stream.

The area of longitudinal strips of land bordering the river on each side is called the *Zor* in Arabic and is referred to in the Bible as the "thicket" (NIV e.g. Jeremiah 49:19, 50:44). Each of the two strips of the *Zor* varies in width from 600 to 5,000 feet, and both were once covered with dense vegetation, including poplar, tamarisks, willow, cane, and reeds. On occasion, during times of flooding, some of the trees were almost completely covered with water. Wild animals – including lions, leopards, and jackals – were commonly found in this dense thicket. Because of the dangers associated with such wildlife, this region was generally avoided by humans and their domesticated animals, except when it was necessary to cross the river.

As one passes through the *Zor*, away from the river on either side, one comes to another longitudinal zone called *Qattara* in Arabic. This region is composed of Lisan marl formations of clay and gypsum, which are impermeable to water. Runoff water in this area is considerable, and miniature "badland" formations abound. This type of terrain begins some 17 miles south of the sea of Galilee and continues all the way down to the Dead Sea. The width of these two strips of the *Qattara* varies from 0.6 to 2 miles. Because of the infertility of the soil, the region lacks a cover of vegetation, and thus the powers of erosion are magnified.

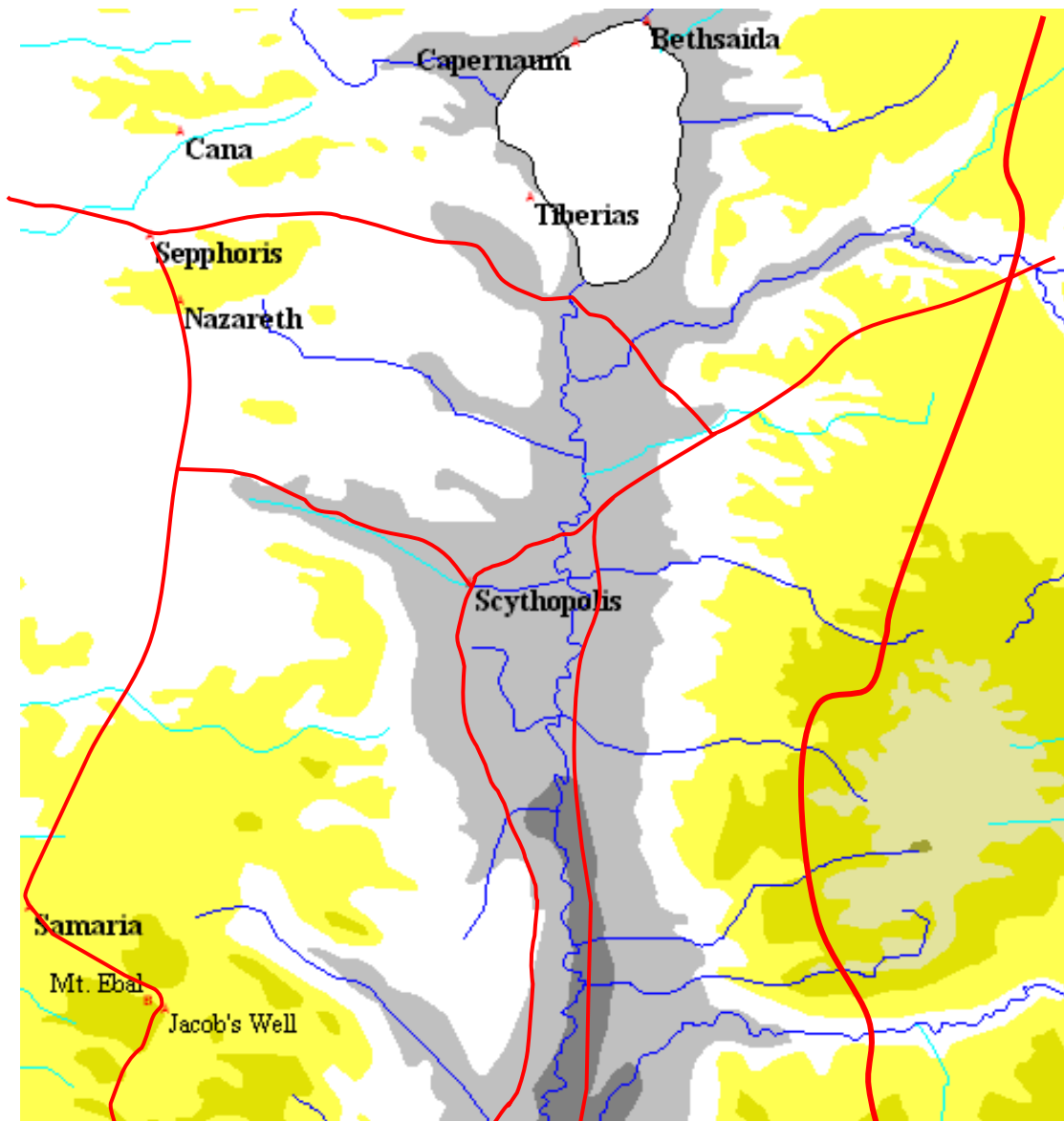
The major portion of the Jordan Valley is the area called the *Ghor* in Arabic (the biblical Arabah). It is bounded on the east by the hills of Gilead and on the west by the hills of Manasseh and Ephraim. It varies in width from 6.2 miles in the north to 2.5 – 3 miles in the middle to 12.5 miles in the Jericho region. The northern section receives sufficient rainfall to grow crops, but as

one progresses southward, the amount of rainfall drops off rapidly to only 4.6 inches at the Allenby Bridge. Where there are springs, or perennial rivers (such as the Yarmuk, Jabbok, Harod, and Wadi Faria) it is possible to irrigate crops. Elsewhere scrub grass grew and was used for grazing flocks from January to March. Temperatures in the valley are warm during the winter and very hot in summer. (Jericho's mean low in January is 50° F, its mean high in August is 102° F). Thus, although people did settle in the northern section of the valley or in the south at the oasis such as Jericho, the valley was not one of the most densely settled areas of the country.

Wars of the Jews, by Flavius Josephus, Book 3, Chapter 10, Verse 7b. “Now Jordan's visible stream arises from this cavern, and divides the marshes and fens of the lake Semechonitis; when it hath run another hundred and twenty furlongs, it first passes by the city Julias, and then passes through the middle of the lake Gennesareth; **after which it runs a long way over a desert,** and then makes its exit into the lake Asphaltitis.”

See map on next page! It depicts the Jordan River Valley and the surrounding roads of during the time of Christ. Color gradients depict elevation changes from the lowest at the Dead Sea (-1100 feet) to the highest around Jerusalem (+3200 feet).

Scale - 15 Miles

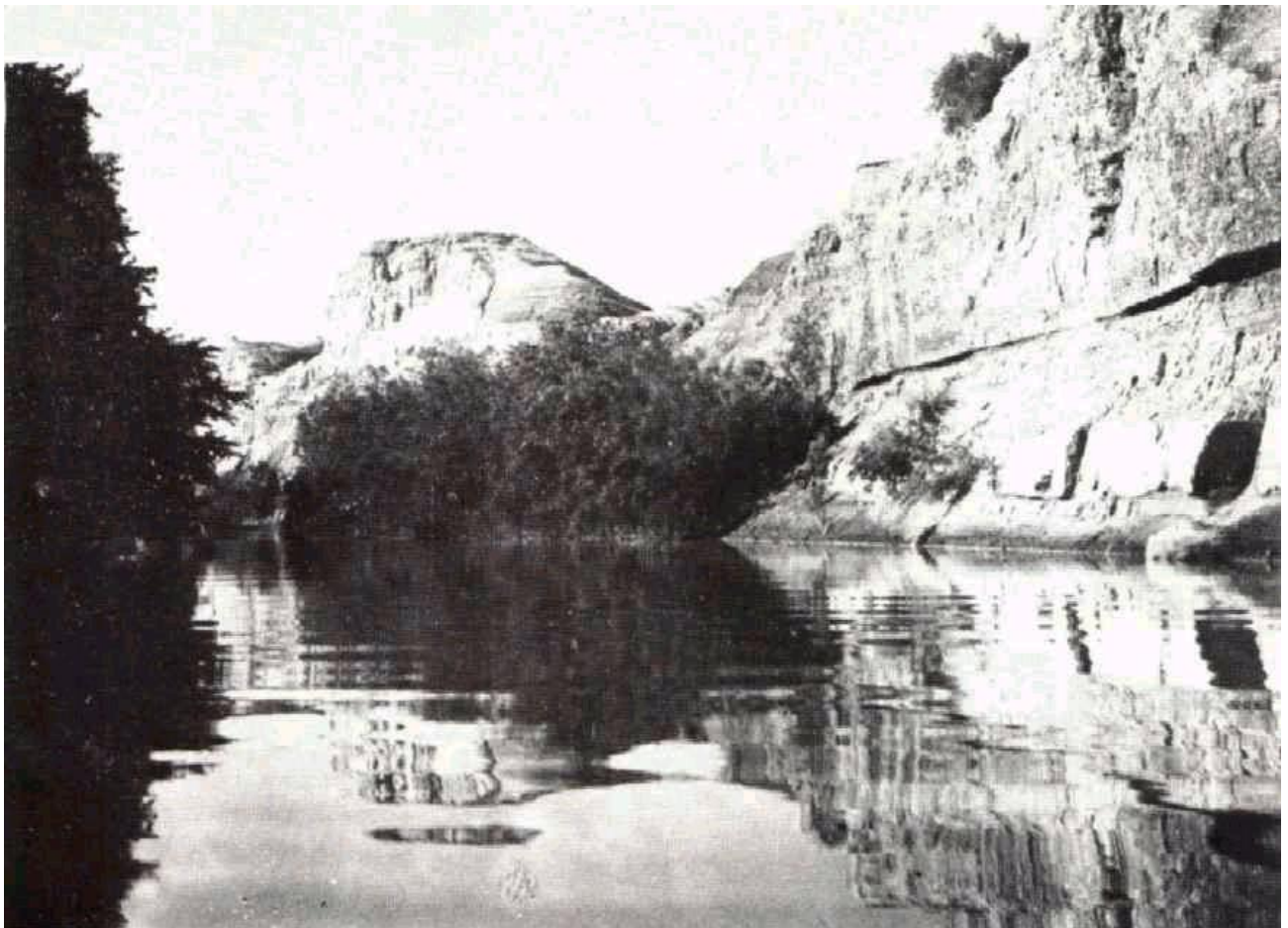


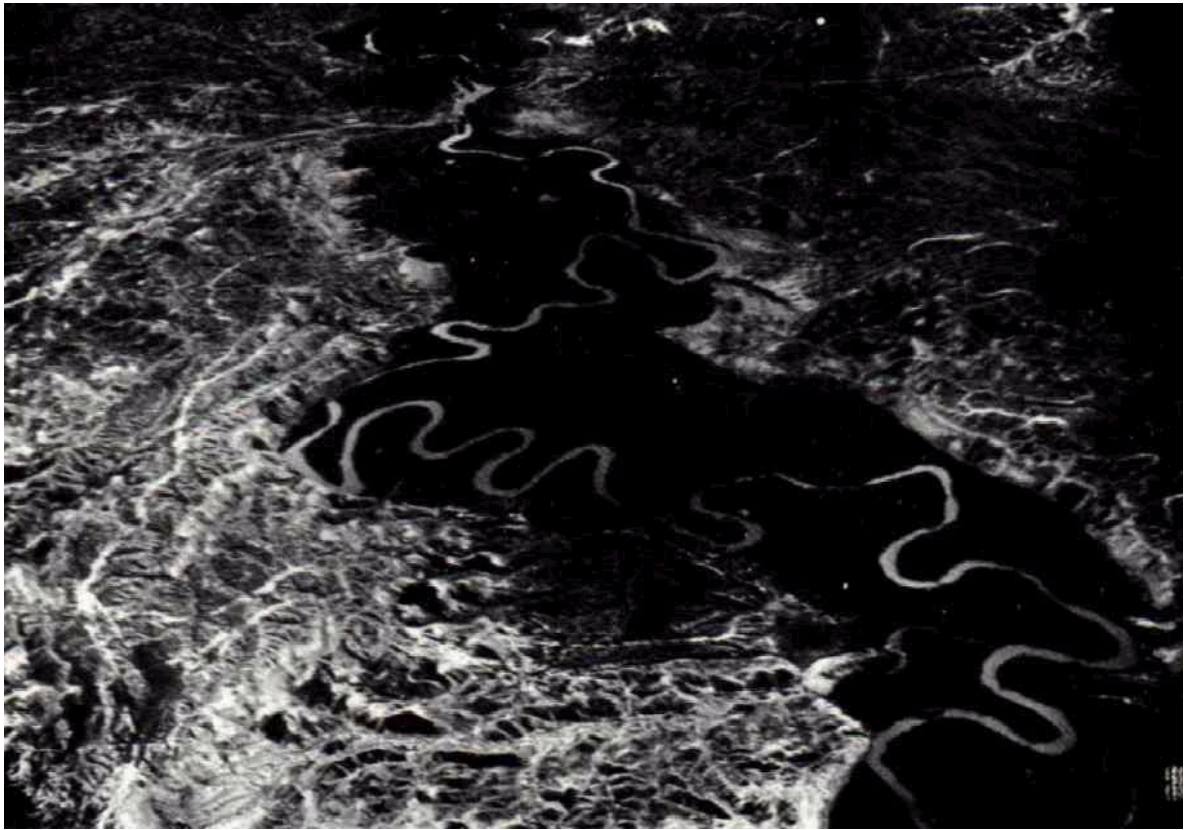
of Christ



Ford of the Jordan – lower Jordan 1920

Jordan River below Beth Shan





Arial View of Jordan Valley

Ford Just below Beth Shan -1913



Appendix 3

The Women who were Witnesses

Matthew 27:55-56 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses,^a and the mother of Zebedee's sons.^b

Mark 15:40-41 Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

Luke 23:49 But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

First the soldiers had come up and had broken the legs of the two thieves crucified beside Jesus. This was to ensure they would die relatively quickly of asphyxiation. After they had broken their legs, they moved on to Jesus and pierced His side with a spear. They then would have waited until the two thieves had expired. Evidently, during this time they moved John and the three women back from the foot of the cross where they had been up until His death.

On page 9 in Lesson 11 of this series the proofs were presented that the three women listed here were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary's sister Salome, who was the mother of the Apostles James and John. There is no need to go over that again.

The larger group of women of which those three were a part had followed Jesus out of Galilee ever since He had come down from the Mt. of Transfiguration eight months earlier. They would have been part of the large group which included Jesus' male disciples. Those included the Twelve and the Seventy (Luke 10:1).

The Burial

John 19:38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea ^c asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus,^d but secretly because he feared the Jews. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away.

^a This was Mary, the mother of Jesus whose two eldest sons were James and Joseph (Matthew 13:55). Joses is another form of Joseph.

^b Zebedee was the father of James and John (Matthew 4:21).

^c The Greek here is *Ἀριμαθαία* {hä-rē-mä-thī'-ä}. It seems to be a Grecianized form of *הַר רָמָה* {har rä-mä'} which means "mountain of Ramah." Ramah was the home of Samuel the Prophet. I believe it had also been the birthplace and original home of John the Baptist. It was about 5 miles NNW of Jerusalem.

^d Joseph is described as "a disciple of Jesus." It is perhaps instructive that as a "disciple" he was also described as "a good and righteous man," and "waiting for the Kingdom of God."

From Fortress Antonia to Golgotha

Matthew 27:57-58 As evening approached, there came a rich man ^a from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

Mark 15:42-45 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath).^b So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly ^c to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead.^d Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

Luke 23:50-52 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright (*or righteous*) man, who had not consented to their decision and action.^e He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

Normally, the bodies of condemned criminals were buried near the city dump which was in the valley outside of the city which was called Gehenna.^f Instead, Joseph offered his own unused tomb.

Between the time that Jesus died shortly after 3:00 PM and the time that His body was taken off of the cross must have been at least an hour and a half. Evidently, after Joseph of Arimathea had seen Jesus die, but before He was pierced with the spear, Joseph had gone back to the Fortress Antonia (by road at least three quarters of a mile) and consulted Pilate. Then Pilate had sent by messenger for the centurion who was at the Cross. The centurion came to Pilate and confirmed that Jesus was dead. He then evidently returned with Joseph and Nicodemus to the Cross where he gave them Jesus' body. This sequence of events thus involved four trips from the Cross to the Fortress which would have been about three to four miles. The travel time alone would have been

^a *Considering that Josephus' description of the Sadducees as being primarily the sect of the rich (Josephus, Antiquities Book 13, Chapter 10, 6) it is likely that Joseph of Arimathea had been a Sadducee while Nicodemus had been a Pharisee.*

^b *The Sabbath here was the special Sabbath of the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. All four of the Gospels tell us that Jesus was crucified on the Preparation Day, the day before the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matthew 27:62. Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54, John 19:14, 31).*

^c *The word "boldly" here (the Greek $\tauολμ\acute{\alpha}\omega$ {tol-mä'-ō}) indicates that it took some courage to risk the wrath of the Sanhedrin to do this. At the least, it probably cost him his seat in that body.*

^d *Although it had always been the plan to kill the prisoners and take them down before nightfall to avoid offending Jewish traditions, Pilate was surprised to find that Jesus was already dead. Crucifixion victims often lingered on for days.*

^e *Joseph of Arimathea had already put himself in the crosshairs of the Sanhedrin by refusing to go along with their verdict.*

^f *Gehenna became identified with and used as a name for Hell or Hades, the place of condemnation.*

at least an hour.^a That didn't include the time it took for the consultation between Pilate and Joseph and the consultation between Pilate and the centurion. This was the centurion who had said ““Surely this man was the Son of God!” I can't help thinking that he also delivered to Pilate a little of what he had seen at the cross. Although Pilate had remained at the Fortress, he would have experienced the darkness and the earthquake.

John 19:39-40 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds.^b Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs.

Matthew 27:59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

Mark 15:46a So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen,

Luke 23:53a Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth

This quantity of spices (75 pounds) used in the burial could only have been afforded by the very rich. Their purpose was aromatic, to mask the smell of decay. They were never intended to preserve the body. We have no reason to believe that Joseph and Nicodemus didn't use the entire 75 pounds. Evidently, the spices were wrapped between the linen strips and the body.

The weight of the burial spices suggests that Nicodemus brought them in a cart. He probably got them and the linen wrappings from his house while Joseph was waiting before Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body. Although the tomb wasn't far away from the cross, they probably used it to carry Jesus' body there.

John 19:41-42 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Matthew 27:60 and placed it in his own new tomb ^c that he had cut out of the rock.^d He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away.

Mark 15:46b and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

^a We don't know if Joseph or the centurion covered the distance on foot or rode on horseback.

^b Since this was late on the Day of Preparation, the shops would have been closed. I think it is likely that what Nicodemus had supplied was what he had laid aside for his own burial. This mirrored what Joseph of Arimathea had done when he gave his own tomb. This fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that Jesus was “with the rich in his death” (Isaiah 53:9).

^c This indicated that Joseph of Arimathea was old enough to be contemplating death.

^d Joseph was a rich man, and his tomb afforded the preferred view for Jewish tombs. It looked down on the Temple.

Luke 23:53b-54 and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

According to the NIV, John says that a garden was located “at the place” Jesus was crucified. The other four translations I looked at (ASV, NASB, NRSV, KJV) have it that a garden was “in the place” Jesus was crucified. This tells us that the tomb was in the same garden where they had crucified Jesus. The traditional locations in Jerusalem are about a hundred yards apart. There is no reason to doubt the locations.

Normally Jewish tombs were used for generations by entire families. The bodies of those who had recently died would be wrapped in linen with aromatic spices. Then, after a reasonable period of time, when the bodies had decomposed, their bones would be gathered up and put in labelled bone jars and set aside in the tombs. That left space for the next body to be buried. Joseph’s tomb had never been used. It had been expensively prepared in a prime spot, overlooking the Temple, with a garden adjoining.

It seems fitting that the place where Jesus was crucified was a garden,^a since it was in a Garden that the original tree of life was located. Figuratively, the Cross became the new tree of life (Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24).^b Given what we know, this wasn’t a small garden. It was probably more like a small park on the side of the hill just outside and above the northern wall of the city.

Matthew 27:61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.^c

Mark 15:47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.^d

Luke 23:55-56 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

We see that Mary sat opposite the tomb while Joseph and Nicodemus prepared and buried the body of Jesus.^e Since John had just recently been entrusted by Jesus with her safety, it is likely that he was there as well. That may be why when he and Peter later went to the tomb, he ran ahead of Peter. He knew exactly where it was.

The precautions of the Pharisees

^a *This is quite contrary to the usual view of paintings and movies of the crucifixion occurring on a bare hillside.*

^b *The site of the Cross will be the site of the Tree of Life in the restored Jerusalem.*

^c *Since Jesus had recently entrusted His mother to John’s care, it is probable that John was there as well.*

^d *Since Jesus had recently entrusted His mother to John’s care, it is probable that John was there as well.*

^e *We know that before twilight, the end of the Jewish day, the soul of Jesus was already in Paradise with the dying thief. Jesus had promised him “today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Time – 4/4/30 AD, 15 Nisan

Matthew 27:62 **The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests High Priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.**

“Preparation Day” is a term which refers to the day before a Sabbath during which no work can be performed. It is a “preparation day” because certain things need to be done to prepare for the next day’s living so that work will not be required. The “preparation day” referred to here was a special “Preparation Day” because the “Sabbath” it preceded was the Passover (the Feast of Unleavened Bread). On this Sabbath, all leaven had to be removed from every house, and so in addition to the usual preparations, every house needed to be swept and scrubbed. That was in addition to the extra preparations for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

So, the day we see here was a Sabbath, a day on which no work was to be done, and yet the High Priests (Annas and Caiaphas) were engaging in work to go to Pilate with this request. What had them so worried?

Matthew 27:63 **“Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’**

It is true they had seen Jesus die, but they had also seen the midday darkness, the earthquake and the ripping of the Temple veil. They were worried that God wasn’t cooperating in the eradication of the teaching of this troublesome Galilean. They also remembered a prophecy that Jesus had made of His resurrection. Just in the Gospel of Matthew, the prophecy was recorded three times (Matthew 16:21, 17:22, and 20:18-19). It is interesting that the Pharisees and High Priests remembered Jesus’ prophecy, and His disciples didn’t. It seems that Jesus’ disciples were only listening to what they wanted to hear. They had never absorbed what He had said about His coming death, let alone His resurrection.

Matthew 27:64 **So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.^a Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”**

The day was the day after Jesus’ crucifixion. The High Priests and the Pharisees were worried that Jesus’ disciples would fake His resurrection. His disciples didn’t even understand enough to believe or not believe in His resurrection.

Matthew 27:65 **“Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.”**

^a *It must be remembered that this conversation took place the day after Jesus’ death. The first day referred to the day after the guard was posted on Thursday. The third day would have been Sunday.*

So, Pilate gave them a Roman guard. What must Pilate have thought? His wife had had the dream about Jesus, Pilate had been impressed with Jesus, and he had written the provocative placard that was placed on the cross, “JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.” Now he saw that the Jewish leaders were still scared of Him.

Matthew 27:66 **So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.**

We have to believe that before the High Priests sealed the tomb, they made sure that Jesus’ body was still there. This pretty much destroys the contentions of some unbelievers that Jesus had just passed out but was revived after being taken off the cross. He would also then have had to survive three full days in the tomb without food or water, as that was the earliest He could have been rescued after the seal was applied.

The Day of the Crucifixion and the Time in the Grave

Before we proceed historically, I think it is a good place to study why we have placed this chronologically on 14 Nisan, 30 AD, which was a Wednesday. I will deal with this by presenting the material I found when answering four questions about the time of the crucifixion.

Question: Was the crucifixion and Passover on Friday or Wednesday?

Comments

There is a widespread acceptance in the Church of the idea that the Crucifixion of Christ took place on “Good Friday.” According to Elwell “Its origins as a special holy day go back to the development of Holy Week in Jerusalem in the late fourth century.” In the Zondervan Picture Encyclopedia of the Bible, under the article on the Passover, I discovered the following statement: “According to an ancient church tradition, Jesus was arrested on Wednesday (cf. Epiphanius, *de fide* XXII, 1).” That would also mean he was crucified on Wednesday. Whatever the ancient tradition was, there is ample reason to assert from Biblical sources that Christ was crucified on Wednesday.

I have always supposed that the primary reason the Church decided (three hundred years after the fact) that the Crucifixion happened on Friday was that the Scriptures (*listed below*) said the day after the Crucifixion was a Sabbath.

Mark 15:42-43 It was Preparation Day (that is, the day before the Sabbath). So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body.

Luke 23:50-54 Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of

Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one had yet been laid. It was Preparation Day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.

John 19:31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

You might notice that the last passage from John 19 goes so far as to say that the day was a "special" Sabbath. Also, the "Day of Preparation" mentioned in all three passages is not just any day, but the Day before Passover and Passover Week as is carefully explained in John 19:14.

John 19:14 It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

If all Sabbaths were Saturdays, the issue would be settled. The only problem is a Sabbath can be any Saturday or Festival day. The day following the Passover sacrifice is such a day. It is the First Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Since any day could be a Sabbath, the three verses listed above do not indicate what day of the week the Lord was Crucified. However, there are other passages that do. For one thing if Jesus was in the grave three full days, He couldn't have been crucified on Friday and be raised by Sunday.

1. The Prophecies of the Three Days -The following prophecies make it clear that Christ would be in the tomb three days and three nights. One prophecy would be enough! This one was repeated six times! Furthermore, they were by Christ himself, and stated that this was to be the great sign of His Messiahship! There is no way that you can work out Friday night to Sunday morning as being three days and three nights without making the veracity of the Word of God look ridiculous.

Matthew 12:39-40 He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 27:63-64 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day." ^a

Mark 8:30-31 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

^a *It must be remembered that this conversation took place the day after Jesus death. The third day refers to the day after the guard was posted on Thursday. The third day would have been Sunday.*

Mark 9:30-31 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”

Mark 10:33-34 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

John 2:18-22 Then the Jews demanded of him, “What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?” Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.” The Jews replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

2. The Women in Luke. The following passage seems to support a Friday crucifixion at first glance. It seems to indicate that the next day after the crucifixion was the Sabbath on which they rested after preparing the spices on the night of the Crucifixion, and it seems that immediately following the Passover the next day they went to the Tomb.

Luke 23:55-24:1 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

However, this passage actually supports the Wednesday Crucifixion since according to Jewish time the new day and therefore the Sabbath started at sundown. If they went home at this time it would already be the Sabbath, the Special Sabbath, and they could not have worked on the spices and perfumes until the next non-Sabbath day. If the crucifixion was on Friday, the only time they could have done their work was on Saturday night before the Sunday morning resurrection. The passage in Luke 23 indicates that a Sabbath chronologically followed their preparations. The next Sabbath would have been a week later. So, a Friday crucifixion does not agree with the implications of this passage. Only a Wednesday crucifixion would provide a non-Sabbath day on which to work between the Crucifixion and Sunday morning. One woman, Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, probably had to go all the way to Bethany for the perfume that the Lord had told her to save for His burial.^a Travel during a Sabbath was forbidden!

^a *John 12:3,7 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. — “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “[It was intended] that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.*

That Jewish Time was reckoned from evening to evening is supported by the following verse.

Leviticus 23:32 It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath.”

3. The Women in Matthew.

Matthew 28:1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

The word “Sabbath” as it appears in all the Greek Texts is σαββάτων {sä'b-bä-t ōn} which is the genitive plural and actually should be translated from the Greek as “Sabbaths”. This would indicate there were two Sabbaths between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection Sunday.

4. The Events Enumerated in the Gospels. In a reading of the four Gospels, I can only find two days clearly delineated in the events between Palm Sunday and the crucifixion. Four days are definitely not indicated by the narration.

How then did the Church come up with Friday as the day of the Crucifixion? My guess is it arose through ignorance of and hostility to Jewish customs.

5. **On the Internet is the following calendar conversion** website at <http://genealogy.org/~scottlee/calconvert.cgi>. I entered 14 Nisan 3790, the day of Christ’s crucifixion to the program and it printed out the following table.^a

Calendar Conversions

The date you entered is

Julian day number: 1732110

Day of week: **Wednesday**

Gregorian calendar: 3 April 0030 AD (modern civil calendar)

Julian calendar: 5 April 0030 AD (old civil calendar)

Jewish calendar: 14 Nisan 3790 (3790/8/14)

Interestingly enough if you fix 33 AD as the year of Christ’s crucifixion, which would be correct if the almost universally acknowledged blunder of fixing Christ’s birth at just before Jan 1, 1 AD was correct, then the date of the crucifixion would have been on Friday. It makes you think that they knowingly chose a questionable year rather than revisit their placement of the crucifixion on Friday. Below is the date conversion from the website.

^a The website <https://www.hebc.com/converter/?hd=14&hm=Nisan&hy=3790&h2g=1> also gives the same result. There are undoubtedly many others.

The date you entered is

Julian day number: 1733204

Day of week: ***Friday***

Gregorian calendar: 1 April 0033 AD (modern civil calendar)

Julian calendar: 3 April 0033 AD (old civil calendar)

Jewish calendar: 14 Nisan 3793 (3793/8/14)

Answer: The crucifixion and Passover were on Wednesday 14 Nisan 30 AD and on that one day in history the appointed time of twilight fell at noon not 6:00 PM.

Question: Why is it important that we establish that Christ was Crucified on Wednesday?

Answer:

1. Because it is vital to understand that the Word of God is completely accurate. If we believe that the Word of God is so fuzzy as to interpret 36 hours (Friday at 6:00 PM to Sunday at 6:00 AM) as 72 hours, we will never come close to fully understanding the Scriptures.

2. Because the three-day typology occurs all over the scriptures. If you do not think the three days are important, you will never catch the importance of the three-day types in the Word.

3. Because the tradition of the Friday crucifixion has created all kinds of dating problems. The only years in which 14 Nisan was a Friday were 33 AD and 26 AD. It seems like the Catholic Church, to support their tradition of a Friday crucifixion decided to pick 33 AD as the year of the Crucifixion. That was a year during which Passover occurred on Friday. However, as a result, because they thought the Bible taught that Jesus lived until His 33rd year, they had to set the birth of Christ in 1 AD.^a Unfortunately, that date was clearly wrong because according to history it was four years after the death of Herod the Great. According to the Bible Herod was alive at the birth of Jesus (Matthew 2:1). If they had picked 26 AD as the year of His Friday Crucifixion that would have put the death of Christ in the same year recorded as the year shown by history (Luke 3:-12) as the year “the word of God came to John in the wilderness” to be baptized. The Bible clearly records at least three Passovers during the life of Jesus. A careful study of John 4:34 shows that there were four.

Question? Are there any other evidences of a Wednesday Crucifixion?

Answer:

Yes. The following verse is evidence:

John 12:1-2 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

^a *It was at this time (525 AD) that the AD and BC system of dating was initiated as a result of Dionysius Exiguus’ placement of the Crucifixion in 33 AD.*

If Jesus arrived in Bethany six days before the Passover and was crucified on Friday, then Passover /1st Day of the Feast was Saturday. That would mean he arrived in Bethany on Sunday and entered Jerusalem no earlier than Monday. If he was crucified on Wednesday, that would mean he arrived in Bethany on Friday, rested on Saturday and entered Jerusalem on Sunday, as accords with the tradition of Palm Sunday.

Question:

How do you deal with the problem of the phrase “the third day?”

One of the problems of interpreting the time is what seems to be the inconsistent description of the day of Jesus’ resurrection. On the one hand Matthew 12:40 is crystal clear that the resurrection took place after Jesus had been buried at least three days and three nights.

Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, ^a so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Also, the Pharisees described Jesus prophecy of the time of His resurrection as follows, also in the book of Matthew as “after three days”:

Matthew 27:63 “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’”

Mark also describes his resurrection as “after three days.”

Mark 8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests (high priests) and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

Mark 9:30b-31 Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise.”

John also described how Jesus promised to build His Temple “in three days.”

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

In another place Mark described the promise as “three days later he will rise.”

Mark 10:33-34 “We are going up to Jerusalem,” he said, “and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests (high priests) and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will

^a *Jonah 1:17*

hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.”

On the other hand, nine times Jesus’ resurrection is called “the third day.” However, it is important to note that all of these descriptions do not say “**on** the third day” in spite of the fact that the NIV takes the liberty of adding the word in their translation.” Is there a discrepancy, or do we just misunderstand what the term “raised the third day” means? Since the Gospel of Matthew contains three of the ten times His resurrection is described as being “the third day” as well as after “three days and three nights” and “after three days,” it seems likely that in the usage of the day, “the third day” was understood to include all three days, not just part of the third day. Otherwise Matthew would be contradicting himself. Furthermore, look at the whole passage in Matthew 27:62-64:

Matthew 27:62-64 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests (high priests) and the Pharisees went to Pilate. “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ So, give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.

This is an important passage for interpreting what the phrase “raised the third day” used in other passages mean. Here the Pharisees have obviously said that Jesus would be raised “after three days” yet here, on the first day after Jesus death they say the tomb should be guarded “until the third day” after they were speaking. This obviously means until after the fourth day was complete (their third day) and His prophecy could be shown to be unreliable.

Below are the three passages in Matthew which say Jesus would be raised “the third day.” It should be understood that there is no preposition “on” here in the Greek. However, because the words “the third day” are in the dative case, the translators chose to supply the preposition “on” to “the third day.” However, this isn’t the only choice that they could have made. In other places where there is a dative, but no preposition the prepositions “since,” “next to” or “against.” have been added. Any of these prepositions would imply that the third day had passed.

Matthew 16:21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests (high priests) and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and ~~on~~ *since*^a the third day^b be raised to life.

^a There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case. Luke 24:21 has “since”

^b This is a phrase that causes some confusion in the chronology of the last week. Just in this episode, Matthew, and Luke call it “the third day”, and Mark calls it “after the third day.” However, in Matthew 12:40, Jesus made it clear that He would spend “three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” In both the Matthew and Luke passages, in the Greek there is no preposition, although the NIV supplies an “on” for this Matthew passage. However, in the Mark passage there is the preposition μετά {meta} which means “after.” Evidently, the phrase, “the

Matthew 17:22-23 When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^a the third day he will be raised to life.”

Matthew 20:17-19 Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests (high priests) and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^b the third day he will be raised to life!”

Below are the six other passages that refer to “the third day.” Five of them are by Luke and one by Paul.

Luke 9:22 And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests (high priests) and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^c the third day be raised to life.”

Luke 18:31-33 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles.^d They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^e the third day he will rise again.”

Luke 24:6-7 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^f the third day be raised again.’”

Luke 24:46-47 He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^g the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Acts 10:39-40 “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead $\Theta\alpha$ *since*^a the third day^b and caused him to be seen.

third day” can be understood somewhat like the English sentence, “It is three days and he hasn’t come.” We would understand that to mean that all three days have passed.

^a There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^b There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^c There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^d Lamentations 4:20

^e There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^f There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^g There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

1 Corinthians 15:3-5 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised ~~on~~ ^{since} ^c the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

In the following passage in Luke the wording is slightly different. It says, “it is the third day since.”

Luke 24:19-23 “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests (high priests) and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since ^d all this ^e took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.

Evidently, the phrase, “It is the third day since” can be understood somewhat like the English sentence, “It is three days since.” We would understand that to mean that all three days have passed.

Also, it should be noted that whatever day Jesus was crucified on, we know that he was buried at the beginning of the next day, the Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread to fulfill the meaning of that Feast on the day of the Feast. It spoke of the body of Christ the bread that came down from Heaven without leaven (yeast).

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 “Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are.^f For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore, **let us keep the Festival, not**

^a There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^b This Greek idiom is evidently equivalent to “it was three days and he had raised him up” because it is clear that Jesus was three days and three nights in the tomb.

^c There is no “on” in the Greek. However, “the third day is in the dative case.

^d Evidently, the phrase, “the third day” can be understood somewhat like the English sentence, “It is three days and he hasn’t come.” We would understand that to mean that all three days have passed.

^e Here there is no preposition but “all this” is in the dative case. Here the translators supplied “since.”

^f During the Day of Preparation for the Passover, the Jewish house was swept and dusted in every nook and cranny to eliminate every speck of yeast or leaven from the house. This was to assure that the Passover bread was completely pure. Christians, who have truly celebrated the real Passover, by believing in the redemptive power of the cross, have become the truly pure bread in Jesus Christ. Since we are pure, spiritually, it is up to us to live, experientially, as we are positionally.

with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

If Jesus was buried on the next day (which started at 6 PM) after He was crucified, and he was crucified on Friday, “on the third day” would have been Monday, not Sunday. Saturday would have been “on the first day.” Sunday would have been “on the second day.”

Answer:

The phrase always means after three days, not after two days and a partial day