



PENTECOSTAL
CHURCH OF ZION

THE REAL HISTORY OF
THE SON OF MAN
HISTORICAL SURVEY

THE REAL HISTORY OF THE SON OF MAN: HISTORICAL SURVEY

The historical facts of the life of Christ can be a murky subject to navigate. Tradition, customs, shifting perspectives, and bias all stand between the Christian and the truth when it comes to getting a clear picture of when the historical events of Jesus' life took place. In this study, we will approach this topic from the perspective of the believer with a couple of assumptions. One, everything recorded in the Bible regarding the events of Jesus' life is true and there are no contradictions in the New Testament accounts. Two, we will carefully consider historical and scientific witnesses and determine if they align with the Biblical accounts. The goal is not to cherry-pick evidence, or to create an easily falsifiable narrative, but rather to build upon the foundation of truth left for us by the Apostles.

Genealogy of Jesus

There are two genealogies given for Jesus, one in Matthew and one in Luke. Many will note these genealogies do not match. That is not the only peculiarity with these genealogies. Let's look at the genealogy in Matthew first.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Matthew 1:2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;

Matthew 1:3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram;

Matthew 1:4 And Aram begat Aminadab; and Aminadab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon;

Matthew 1:5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

Matthew 1:6 And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

Matthew 1:7 And Solomon begat Roboam; and Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa;

Matthew 1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

Matthew 1:9 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias;

Matthew 1:10 And Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias;

Matthew 1:11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

Matthew 1:12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

Matthew 1:13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor;

Matthew 1:14 And Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud;

Matthew 1:15 And Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob;

Matthew 1:16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

Matthew 1:17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham, and follows the lineage down the line of the Kings of Judah. You will notice many familiar names rendered in their Greek transliterations, but it should be easy to compare this with the Old Testament genealogies and determine who is who. It is also very important to understand that Matthew is not doing this genealogy for the same reasons we might compile a genealogy in our Western culture today. Matthew is establishing Jesus as the rightful heir to the throne of David, and not merely listing every person in the lineage from Abraham to Joseph. Whereas when we think of a genealogy today, it must be complete in terms of every generation (as we count generations) represented.

Matthew makes note of fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to Babylonian captivity, and fourteen generations from captivity to Jesus. The number fourteen is important to Matthew here, not accuracy as we reckon it, but rather to make a stronger religious point. It is very difficult today to understand the intent behind Matthew's insistence on fourteen generations in each era, but it is easy to prove that it was not meant to be a comprehensive generation list. Let's start by creating a timeline.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

Galatians 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Paul states that from the time God made a covenant with Abraham, to the time of Moses was 430 years. Paul knew the history of his people as well as anyone, given his background. Let's look at the Old Testament record of this.

Exodus 12:40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.

Exodus 12:41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

It would be a mistake to read this as “the Israelites were in Egypt four hundred and thirty years.” The writer is saying the sojourning was four hundred and thirty years, and the people at that time were living in Egypt. The Apostle Paul had access to the Greek and Hebrew texts that existed during the time of Christ, and the Greek text still lives with us today, and is called the Septuagint, and was composed approximately 300 years before Jesus. The Septuagint often better reflects the original Hebrew readings. The Old Testament, in virtually all English translations today, comes from the Masoretic text, named after a group that copied, edited, and distributed the Old Testament in Hebrew. The oldest complete copy of the Old Testament used in our Bibles today is called the Leningrad Codex, from the 11th century AD. Let’s read Exodus in the Septuagint.

Exodus 12:40 And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Chanaan, was four hundred and thirty years.

As we can see, this agrees with what Paul tells us, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob sojourned in Canaan, then Jacob and his house moved to Egypt, and the period of time they dwelt in both places was 430 years.

Paul gives a time frame for the period of the Judges as well.

Acts 13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

Acts 13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

Acts 13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

We know that Samuel, the last Judge, anointed Saul and David to be King over Israel. Paul tells us this period of the judges lasted “about” or approximately four hundred and fifty years.

1 Kings 6:1 And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

While it’s not really possible to know what exact start and end point each chronicler has in mind when recording dates, this time frame in 1 Kings does fit Paul’s approximate number given during his sermon in the synagogue. The point here is not to go too far into the weeds on exact dates, but rather to establish the approximate length of time in Matthew’s genealogy.

Given what we have established, the first timeframe Matthew gives, from Abraham to David, is roughly 910 years. If you divide that by 14, then you have an average of 65 years for each generation. According to DNA research, male-line generations average 32 years (*Ancestry Magazine, Sep-Oct 2005, Volume 23, Number 4, pp51-53.*) Matthew's genealogy follows Chronicles from Abraham to David, and it seems that the scribes simply did not set out to record every male in the lineage, but rather recorded only certain names for a reason that is not clear to us today.

During the second era of Matthew's genealogy, David to captivity, we have the omission of kings who are recorded in the Old Testament. Notice Matthew goes from Joram to Uzziah.

Matthew 1:8 And Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

Matthew deliberately excludes three kings who reigned after Joram and Uzziah: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. Why did he do this? The truth is, without a specific revelation, no one can be sure. They have some interesting shared traits. Joram married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, and Ahaziah was their son, making him the grandson of Ahab. Some have surmised that these kings being the grandson, great grandson and great-great grandson of Ahab, means that Ahab's curse was visited upon them to ensure no one would claim to be a member of the house of Ahab ever again, as all males would be cut off from Ahab's house according to scripture.

1 Kings 21:17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

1 Kings 21:18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

1 Kings 21:19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

1 Kings 21:20 And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found thee: because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD.

1 Kings 21:21 Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

1 Kings 21:22 And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin.

Also, going along with this line of thinking is the curse against idolaters recorded by Moses.

Deuteronomy 5:8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:

Deuteronomy 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah were all idolaters. This isn't unique to Judean kings, but along with this fact, all three were assassinated by their own people. Joash and Amaziah actually served God during the first portions of their reigns, but eventually began to serve other gods. Joash tragically killed the son of the man who raised him and protected him as a child for prophesying against him under the inspiration of the Spirit.

Are these reasons why Matthew didn't include these kings? Possibly, but it is difficult to know for sure. The point that matters is this: Matthew did not include every biological ancestor because he did not *intend* to. It also proves the point that when the Bible says "begat" it does not necessarily mean the next name to follow is a direct son, but could sometimes be simply referring another person in the lineage. Similar to how father can mean immediate father, or ancestor.

Using the same calculation we used on the first era, let's look at the average span of years for the generations of the second era. While still containing fourteen generations, this is a much, much, shorter span of time, because most of the names are direct father-to-son lineage, except for the omitted kings. Here is a table showing the reigns of the kings from David to the captivity in years:

David 40	Ahaziah 1	Hezekiah 29
Solomon 40	Athaliah 7	Manasseh 55
Rehoboam 17	Joash 40	Amon 2
Abijah/Abijam 3	Amaziah 29	Josiah 31
Asa 41	Uzziah 52	Jehoahaz 3 months
Jehoshaphat 25	Jotham 16	Jehoiakim 11
Jehoram 8	Ahaz 16	Jehoiachin 3 months

Adding up all of the reigns of the kings gives us 463 years. The Bible hints at the fact that some of these reigns may have some overlap, such as when Uzziah was leprous near the end of this reign. If we divide 463 by 14, we get an average generation of 33 years, which is very close to the average male-line lineage. If we add the generations we know were intentionally excluded, then we see a generation age of 23 years, which is far less than the scientifically established average male-line generation. Many of these kings had children at much younger

ages due to their means. The Old Testament chroniclers were very thorough at tracking every father and son who sat on the throne, for obvious reasons.

The captivity is a well recorded event in history. Cuneiform tablets persist today documenting how Nebuchadnezzar sieged Jerusalem and obtained the surrender of Jehoiakim in 597 BC (*D. J. Wiseman, Chronicles of Chaldean Kings in the British Museum (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956.)*) This occurred in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign by Babylonian records, but eighth year according to Jewish accounting, which included his year of ascension. Eleven years later, in 586 BC, the city would be totally destroyed. The Bible's account is supported by the archeological evidence detailing how the Babylonians systematically destroyed the city with fire and pulled down its walls (*Shalom, N.; Vaknin, Y.; Shaar, R.; Ben-Yosef, E.; Lipschits, O.; Shalev, Y.; Gadot, Y.; Boaretto, E. (2023). "Destruction by fire: Reconstructing the evidence of the 586 BCE Babylonian destruction in a monumental building in Jerusalem". Journal of Archaeological Science.*)

This means the third and final era in Matthew's genealogy covers just under 600 years. Applying the same methodology as before, we wind up with an average generation of 42 years. Not as wide a gap as the first era, but still more than two standard deviations above the average. Also, during this era, Matthew does not mention Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, only Jeconiah, who was also known as Jehoiachin, who was carried away to Babylon. (*James B. Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969) 308.*)

So, what does all this mean? It means Matthew's purpose in his genealogy was not to record every male in the line of Christ from Abraham to Jesus, but rather to demonstrate that Jesus had a legal right to the throne of David through the ancestors of his adopted father. Jesus had station as firstborn in Joseph's house, and as such, was heir to the throne. A throne that no longer existed due to Roman occupation. Here is the kicker, however; Joseph was Jesus legal father, but he was *not* his biological father. And although the Jews of the time considered the right legal line to the throne to be from David through Solomon's lineage, God certainly did not. This is where we pivot to discuss Jesus' *birthright* to the throne.

At the beginning of this study, it was mentioned one our assumptions is there are no contradictions in the scriptures, only misinterpretations. Most of those misinterpretations involve a lack of knowledge of life and customs in the first century and prior. With that in mind, let's turn our attention to the genealogy in the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 3:23 And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

Luke 3:24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

Luke 3:25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

Luke 3:26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

Luke 3:27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

Luke 3:28 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

Luke 3:29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

Luke 3:30 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

Luke 3:31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

Luke 3:32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

Luke 3:33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

Luke 3:34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

Luke 3:35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

Luke 3:36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

Luke 3:37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

Luke 3:38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

It won't take long to notice there are stark differences right away from the Matthew genealogy. For one, there are a lot more names in the Luke genealogy, 77 to be exact. Disregarding the fact there is a section from Adam to Abraham (in reverse order,) from David to Jesus there are not 28 generations listed as in Matthew, but rather 43. In the Matthew genealogy there are intentional gaps between the names of the generations listed, but in Luke

we find from David to Jesus, it appears to be a very direct lineage with no omitted names. Using our calculation from earlier, we have an average generation age of about 24 years. There certainly doesn't seem to be room for any gaps in that timeframe.

So why two genealogies? Did the Apostles simply not know what they were talking about? On the contrary, everyone has two genealogies, because everyone has two parents. Notice the genealogies are the same from Abraham to David. This is the genealogy provided by the Old Testament which both Matthew and Luke would have used. (It is quite possible that Luke got some history from Paul, as they traveled many years together and Luke was very likely Greek due to the derivation of his name, his command of the Greek language, and many historical accounts attesting to his Gentile origin.) After David, however, the lineage diverges. Matthew follows the line of kings through Solomon, and Luke follows the line of one of the princes also born to Bathsheba, Nathan.

It is important the genealogies converge at David even though they take different routes.

Psalm 132:11 The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

Jeremiah 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

As the prophets declared, Jesus would indeed come from the biological lineage of David. Joseph, however, was not really Jesus' father, as the scriptures tell us, so his only biological connection to David had to be through Mary. Since his biological relation to David came through Mary, then his birthright to David also came through Mary. Luke's genealogy, therefore, is the lineage of Mary, and not Joseph. The genealogy, being reversed from Matthew's does not say that Heli begat Joseph, merely that Joseph was the son of Heli. This distinction is important, however, let us first see how Luke's genealogy has to be the biological one.

Jeremiah 22:24 As I live, saith the LORD, though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence;

Jeremiah 22:25 And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand of them whose face thou fearest, even into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldeans.

Jeremiah 22:26 And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

Jeremiah 22:27 But to the land whereunto they desire to return, thither shall they not return.

Jeremiah 22:28 Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not?

Jeremiah 22:29 O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.

Jeremiah 22:30 Thus saith the LORD, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Curses and genealogies, name a more classic pairing. The prophet Jeremiah spoke this curse from the Lord on Jeconiah and his descendants. None of them would ever inherit the throne of David. Jesus Christ did inherit the throne of David, and rules in heaven forever.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

To address Joseph being called the “son of Heli,” one thing is important to note. In a patrilineal culture, lineage will always be recorded through males, and this is simply what is going on here. There is reason to believe Mary was an only child or at least had no brothers. Catholics get their tradition for Mary being an only child from the *protoevangelium of James*, an apocryphal work circa 150 AD that seeks to deify Mary as being an immaculate conception. One nugget you could perhaps glean from this is one of an early account testifying to the lack of sons from her parents. The lack of sons is important when it comes to inheritance. Let’s take a look back at the time of Joshua for scriptural precedent.

Numbers 26:33 And Zelophehad the son of Hopher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

Numbers 27:1 Then came the daughters of Zelophehad, the son of Hopher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph: and these are the names of his daughters; Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

Numbers 27:2 And they stood before Moses, and before Eleazar the priest, and before the princes and all the congregation, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying,

Numbers 27:3 Our father died in the wilderness, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themselves together against the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own sin, and had no sons.

Numbers 27:4 Why should the name of our father be done away from among his family, because he hath no son? Give unto us therefore a possession among the brethren of our father.

Numbers 27:5 And Moses brought their cause before the LORD.

Numbers 27:6 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Numbers 27:7 The daughters of Zelophehad speak right: thou shalt surely give them a possession of an inheritance among their father's brethren; and thou shalt cause the inheritance of their father to pass unto them.

Numbers 27:8 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.

God himself decreed that if a man had no sons when he died, the inheritance would pass to his daughter. In light of this knowledge of how inheritance worked in the Old Covenant period according to God, then the only way for Mary to pass the inheritance to Jesus by birthright, was if she had no brothers. However, due to the patrilineal nature of the genealogy, Joseph, since he was Mary's husband, and thus caretaker of Mary's inheritance was listed as "son" of Heli, when in reality he was the son-in-law (*Ironside, Harry A. (2007). Luke. Kregel Academic. p. 73.*) The Greek word for son, *Hious*, can also mean a legitimate son, a son artificially constituted, a descendant, a son as implying connection in respect of membership, service, resemblance, manifestation, destiny, etc. (*Wm.D.Mounce Interlinear.*) Some speculate that Joseph was adopted in order to officially be a legal heir. It is hard to say, however, it is likely some of the speculation is true, considering we have established by the scriptures the following:

- **Mary and Joseph were blood descendants of David.**
- **Joseph was not Jesus biological father.**
- **Jesus had to be a biological descendant of David.**
- **Mary was Jesus only blood connection to David.**
- **Luke's genealogy has to be Mary's genealogy because of the curse of Jeconiah.**
- **Mary was likely an only child, and at the very least had no brothers.**

1 Timothy 1:4 Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

Titus 3:9 But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

Paul, a wise Apostle and teacher of the Word, knew that you usually wind up with more questions than answers when you study genealogies, and it's best to leave them alone most of the time. There is one more point, however, that must be addressed concerning Matthew and

Luke's records. While they diverge after David, there is a brief apparent convergence with a captivity era figure named Zerubbabel.

Hag 2:21 Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

Hag 2:22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

Hag 2:23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

God said that Jeconiah was a signet ring that he was casting off, but using the same metaphor, God says he is going to put on Zerubbabel like a signet ring. Remember, God said no son of Jeconiah would ever again prosper, none would sit on the throne of David. The signet ring is royal language, in both casting off and putting on. If Jesus was biologically descended from a son of Jeconiah, then he could not have been Messiah.

Oftentimes the simplest explanation is the best one. Salathiel, listed as the father of Zerubbabel, has a different father in both accounts. One's father is Jeconiah, and one is Neri. In fact, you won't find any names matching up until you go back to David. Zerubbabel means "sown in Babylon," so it is very likely that many sons bore that name who were born during the captivity. In the time of Christ, there are many women named Mary, many men named Simon, etc. It seems unlikely that if Luke intended the same Salathiel and Zerubbabel as Matthew, he would have mistaken Salathiel's father as someone other than the king. Rather, both records are correct, and these were simply common names at the time. If you study the kings of Judah and Israel, you will notice many shared names, as it seems common names occurred even more among royal lines, and the Zerubbabel in Mary's line would still be one of the princes of the kingdom.

So, who was the Zerubbabel in the Biblical narrative who was the Governor of Judea? The Grandson of Jeconiah, or Neri? Could he be the grandson of Jeconiah? Close examination of the curse on Jeconiah shows two main aspects. First, Jeconiah and his mother would not return from Babylon. The Bible goes out of its way to let us know that it was a big deal that Jeconiah's mother was carried away to captivity as well. Remember, Jeconiah, referred to in Kings as Jehoiachin, was eighteen years old.

2 Kings 24:8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem.

2 Kings 24:12 And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.

2 Kings 24:15 And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon.

Jeconiah's mother is named specifically, and it was noted multiple times she was one of the ones carried away, just as Jeremiah prophesied.

Secondly, the curse states that none of his seed "shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David." Looking at the underlying text this means none of his descendants would succeed to sit on the throne of David. Zerubbabel was Governor of Judea, serving under the Persian King, he was not a king and he did not sit on a king's throne. There is not a conflict in the Word if Zerubbabel the Governor is the grandson of Jeconiah. Being the grandson of Jeconiah puts Zerubbabel in the right timeframe to be the correct age to lead the people after a 70-year captivity. However, counting the generations, the Zerubbabel from Luke's genealogy could also be a candidate to be the Zerubbabel in the Bible narrative as well. Each of them had 21 generations between David and themselves.

Many have offered different possibilities involving adoption or Levirate marriage, among others. The point is not to determine which of these explanations is true, but rather to understand that the line of Joseph and the line of Mary are distinct and Matthew and Luke deal with each, respectively, in their genealogies. So, with that being said, let us move on, before we start to wade too deep into "foolish questions."

Jesus Birth and Early Years

Matthew and Luke also offer accounts of Jesus' birth and the events that followed. Let's start by examining when Jesus' birth took place.

In the Bible there were 24 courses of priests established by David to perform duties in the temple sequentially.

1 Chronicles 24:7 Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah,

1 Chronicles 24:8 The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,

1 Chronicles 24:9 The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,

1 Chronicles 24:10 The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,

1 Chronicles 24:11 The ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah,

1 Chronicles 24:12 The eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim,

1 Chronicles 24:13 The thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,

1 Chronicles 24:14 The fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,

1 Chronicles 24:15 The seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Apses,

1 Chronicles 24:16 The nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel,

1 Chronicles 24:17 The one and twentieth to Jachin, the two and twentieth to Gamul,

1 Chronicles 24:18 The three and twentieth to Delaiah, the four and twentieth to Maaziah.

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

During the time of the New Testament, the 24 courses took turns working in the temple, and each group would return home when their “course” was finished. Three times a year, all courses would be in Jerusalem, Passover, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Otherwise, only one course at a time served in the temple. The courses began after Passover each year. Each course served eight days, Sabbath to Sabbath (*Josephus, Antiquities 7.14.7.*) Every course would have two turns per year, plus the three weeks of the year where every course was present.

2 Chronicles 5:11 And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course:

In Luke, we see that John’s father Zacharius was in the course of Abijah, or the eighth course.

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

Zacharias was given the news he and his wife would have a son, and then Zacharias finished his course and then returned home.

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

For reasons we will discuss later, the year we are keying in on here is 4 BC. In 4 BC, the new moon signaling Nisan 1 was in the last week of March (*US Naval Observatory, Astronomical Applications.*) This means the eighth course would have been in service in the second half of May. The earliest conception date for John would be the end of May.

Luke 1:24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

Luke 1:25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Luke 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Luke 1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

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

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

As we can see from these beautiful scriptures, Mary conceives Jesus during the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy. This means Jesus was six months younger than John the Baptist. Since Elisabeth conceived in late May 4 BC, that means John was born in the beginning of March 3 BC. This means that **Jesus was born in September of 3 BC.**

The 3 BC date for Jesus has a great deal of support from within scripture, as well as external historical support. Let's look at some historical evidence first.

We read earlier that Jesus about 30 years old when he began his ministry. Luke told Theophilus in Luke 1:3 he wanted to write in order, and Luke does not fail to live up to that. Jesus was indeed 30 when his ministry began. Here are some things that must line up with the timeline of Jesus life from a historical perspective:

- **Jesus must have been born before the death of Herod the Great, with enough time for the events after his birth to take place, probably about two years.**
- **John's ministry must begin in the 15th year of Tiberius rule.**
- **The temple renovation under Herod must have been completed before Jesus visited it with his disciples during the first year of his ministry (John 2.)**

Let's examine the first point, the death of Herod the Great. The classic date for the death of Herod was 1 BC, then many historians began to argue for a 4 BC death. However, in recent years the 1 BC date has been gaining traction. Coinage has been incredibly helpful in dating Herod's death with more accuracy to 1 BC. Here is a quote from biblical chronology expert Andrew Steinmann:

"For about 100 years there has been a consensus among scholars that Herod the Great reigned from 37 to 4 BCE. However, there have been several challenges to this consensus over the past four decades, the most notable being the objection raised by W. E. Filmer. This paper argues that Herod most likely reigned from late 39 BCE to early 1 BCE, and that this reconstruction of his reign can account for all of the surviving historical references to the events of Herod's reign more logically than the current consensus can. Moreover, the reconstruction of Herod's reign proposed in this paper accounts for all of the datable evidence relating to Herod's reign, whereas the current consensus is unable to explain some of the evidence that it dismisses as ancient errors or that it simply ignores."

- Andrew Steinmann, *"When Did Herod the Great Reign?" Novum Testamentum 51 (2009) 1-29*

Another biblical scholar agrees with the 1 BC date for the death of Herod:

"A date of 1 BC for Herod's death is not only possible, but more accurately reflects the data now available."

- Dr. Michael S. Heiser, *"September 11: Happy Birthday to Jesus"*
<https://drmsh.com/september-11-happy-birthday-to-jesus/> (2016)

Many other historians and scholars have weighed in on the topic, I encourage you to read further, but suffice it to say, a 1 BC death of Herod the Great is certainly on the table. His death transpiring two years after the Jesus birth aligns perfectly with the Biblical and historical data.

Jesus began his ministry when he was "about" 30 years old, during the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius was born 42 BC in Rome to an affluent and influential family. Tiberius

was hand-picked by Augustus as a potential heir to the throne and started his political life at the age of 17 in 24 BC (*Marcus Velleius Paterculus (1924) [c. AD 30]. "Book II". The Roman History.*)

Augustus Caesar died in AD 14, but was bedridden with illness the last two years of his life. Tiberius was declared "co-princeps" in AD 12, after returning from a stint in Germania (*Marcus Velleius Paterculus (1924) [c. AD 30]. "Book II". The Roman History.*)

"Tiberius returned and celebrated the triumph which he had postponed, accompanied also by his generals, for whom he had obtained the triumphal regalia. And before turning to enter the Capitol, he dismounted from his chariot and fell at the knees of his father, who was presiding over the ceremonies. Since the consuls caused a law to be passed soon after this that he should govern the provinces jointly with Augustus and hold the census with him, he set out for Illyricum on the conclusion of the lustral ceremonies."

Tiberius was granted full equal power to Augustus by AD 13 (*Seager, Robin (2005) [1972]. Tiberius (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.*) Marking AD 13 as the first year of Tiberius rule, the fifteenth year of his rule would be in AD 27. It is at this time that John the Baptist begins his ministry (Luke 3.) Later in the chapter it is recorded that Jesus was baptized by John, and then after that Jesus was about 30 years old. The precise timing of these events is not clear, though it seems that John's ministry had time to gain a great deal of followers before Jesus was baptized. Based on this educated assumption, Jesus began his ministry after he was baptized in AD 27. Even though only 29 years had passed, let's look at this quote from E.L. Martin's *The Star of Bethlehem: The Star That Astonished the World*:

"At the Passover of C.E. 28, when He officially began his ministry, He was within His year. It would be rather a strange way for us westerners to reckon the years of a person's life. During the whole of a person's 30th year the word meaning "about" or "as if" was used to denote the year. Luke records: "Jesus began [his ministry] about thirty years of age." Irenaeus, however, shows what Luke meant. "For when he [Jesus] was baptized, he had not yet completed his thirtieth year [He was indeed already, but He had not completed year], but was beginning to be about thirty years of age." Irenaeus had just said He was already... so "beginning to be about" was used of a person all the way from the beginning to the ending of a person's year." During the whole of a person's year, the word meaning "about" or "as if" was applied. When His year 30 ended, He had then concluded his year. This means that Jesus was indeed 30 when He began His ministry, but He had not yet completed His 30th year. Irenaeus said this was the time that the Jews called a man a "Master."

The second temple built during the time of Zerubbabel had been through a lot. It stood from around 516 BC to AD 70. The temple was desecrated by the Seleucid Emperor Antiochus Epiphanies in 167 BC and was later purified and rededicated by Judah Maccabees. (*Seager, Robin (2005) [1972]. Tiberius (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.*) Herod sought to renovate

the temple and massively expanded the court from 17 acres to 36 acres, doubling its area. The process began about 19/20 BC and worship and religious function continued throughout the construction period without ceasing (*Leen and Kathleen Ritmeyer (1998). Secrets of Jerusalem's Temple Mount.*)

John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

John 2:14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

John 2:15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

John 2:16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

John 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

John 2:18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

John 2:19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

John 2:20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

John 2:21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

This is the first Passover Jesus attended during his ministry in the spring of AD 28. At this point the temple construction had been completed. If Jesus had been born as early as some claim, 6 or 7 BC, then the temple would not have been finished yet. We see this evidence agrees with the 3 BC birth date of Jesus as well.

Now that these historical dates have been addressed, let's compare Biblical and scientific data to confirm our 3 BC date for the birth of Jesus. (*References for astronomical information in the following section: E.L. Martin, The Star of Bethlehem: The Star That Astonished the World, Chapters 3,4,5; Michael S Heiser, Reversing Hermon, Chapter 4*)

Revelation 12:1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

Revelation 12:2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Revelation 12:3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

Revelation 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Revelation 12:5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Why are we talking about the book of Revelation in a study of the historical timeline of Jesus' life? Because John is presenting something extremely significant to us. The subject matter is clearly about the birth of the Messiah, the man-child that would rule all nations with a rod of iron. This is clearly about the birth of Jesus, we won't go into it here, but the rod of iron motif is through all scripture, Old and New Testament, to refer to the Messiah.

The next point to notice is the location of the vision John is seeing. He begins by telling us he is seeing a wonder in heaven. In the ancient world, movement of planets, stars, and constellations had significant meaning. God actually intended humans to use the heavenly bodies for signs.

Genesis 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

The lights in the sky are not only to just track time, but also for signs. This kind of language is throughout scripture.

Job 38:31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

Job 38:32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

Constellations were known and tracked since time immemorial. The mistake made by the pagan world was worshipping the heavenly host rather than the creator. Joseph's dreams, David in Psalm 19 and several other examples show the sun, moon, and stars were very important as signs to the ancient Israelites. This does not mean they were fortune tellers; astrology was condemned in scripture (Isaiah 47:13.)

Numbers 24:17 I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

This was a prophecy given about the coming of the Messiah, the King of Kings. Notice the star language once again. This is important because the wise men from the East who came to visit Jesus said they saw his star and they knew he was a king.

Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Matthew 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

An angel didn't tell them, a prophet didn't tell them, they didn't have a supernatural vision. They were pagan astrologers reading the night sky and it told them a King was born in Judea, the star guided them to Jerusalem. ("Wise men" has always been the Biblical euphemism for astrologers or magicians. Genesis 41:8, Exodus 7:11, Ester 6:13, Daniel 2:12, Daniel 5:7) What sign in the heavens told them this?

Amazingly, an incredible confluence of signs occurred on the day Jesus was born, September 11, 3 BC. Astronomy programs will display this arrangement when this time window is entered. Along the ecliptic (line drawn by astronomers to chart star movement) the constellation Virgo, known as the Virgin, aligned with the sun directly in her midst, "clothed with the sun," and the moon was positioned at her feet, also as Revelation 12 says. Amazingly, this alignment only occurred within a *90-minute window*. Sunset at 6:15PM to Moonset at 7:45PM. This means that the moment Jesus Christ was born could possibly be known down to the span of an hour and a half.

Genesis 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Genesis 49:11 Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes:

On Virgo's head was the constellation Leo, the Lion. The Lion is heavily associated with royalty *and* the tribe of Judah. This is the crown on the head of the woman. Regulus, known as "Rex" the king star, was positioned between the front paws of the Leo constellation (Genesis 49:10.) Jupiter was known in ancient times as the King planet, as it was the largest. And was moving to a confluence with Regulus which would have shown incredibly, offering a great candidate for the star the wise men saw. In fact, Jupiter was actually moving East to West, reversing its motion in the sky with a retrograde movement. The king planet moving toward the king star.

A retrograde planetary movement is when a planet orbit reaches its zenith when viewed from a point along the plane of its orbit. The planets orbit the sun in elliptical orbits, mostly along the same plane. This means from our perspective, the planet's motion in the sky will appear to slow, stop, and then begin to move in the opposite direction.

The wise men saw the star rising above the eastern horizon. In August 12, 3 BC, Jupiter rose as a morning star, then Jupiter had six conjunctions with other planets and the star Regulus. Jupiter finally joined with Mars, Venus, and Mercury on August 27, 2 BC. Toward the end of 2 BC, however, Jupiter left its confluence with the other three planets and moved westward each morning and would have been visible before dawn. We will discuss the wise men who came from the East more later, but they probably arrived in Jerusalem over a year after Jesus was born. The Bible says the star “went ahead of them.” This could mean Jupiter led them to Jesus in this way.

Isaiah 27:1 In that day the LORD with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

The last constellation to address is of course, the dragon, representing the serpent from the garden, known as Satan. John said the dragon stood before the woman. To right and just below Virgo was the constellation Hydra. Hydra, a dragon of the deep, associates closely with Leviathan in scripture, a sea serpent of the underworld. Above Hydra, are the constellations Corax and Crater, having seven and ten stars respectively, matching the seven heads and ten horns mentioned in Revelation 12.

Isaiah 27:13 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

Another strong support for the September 11th, 3 BC date is that it was also Tishri 1 on the Jewish Calendar. This was Feast of Trumpets. A trumpet was to be blown on Tishri 1, which in the rabbinic period came to be viewed as the beginning of the new year. God’s eschatological judgement of all people was expected to fall on this day. The new year trumpet also proclaimed hope in the ongoing and ultimate kingship of God, in God’s judgement and reward according to people’s deeds, and in Israel’s final restoration (*Greg Beale, The Book of Revelation, 620; cp b. Rosh Hashanah 16.*) According to Jewish tradition, Tishri 1 was the day of creation, and not only that but of the renewal of creation as well (*T.H. Gaster, Festivals of the Jewish Year, 4th edition, 109.*) because of the harvest, and the lush garden of Eden being associated with the harvest season.

We tend to think of the Spring as when the Jewish calendar begins, as that was the lunar calendar given to Moses, however, there was a more ancient calendar that is closer to the ancient Babylonian calendar that contained 12 months of 30 days for a total of 360 days in a year. If you pay close attention to the account of Noah and the flood in Genesis, you will see they used this 30-day month calendar. Also, in prophecy, it also appears upon close inspection that a year is considered 360 days. In Exodus 12, God gives Israel a new month to celebrate as the first month.

Leviticus 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

According to ancient Jewish tradition, a new King was always crowned and his reign officially began on Tishri 1, the Feast of Trumpets, starting with David being crowned King of Judah on Tishri 1, and King of Israel on Nisan 1. In the divided kingdom, it is said that Israel used Nisan 1 as the civil new year, while Judah continued to use Tishri 1, the more ancient new year (*Edwin R. Thiele, The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings.*)

Events after Jesus Birth

Remember our assumption that the Gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke do not contradict one another? How then, can the events recorded in both be true? Did wise men visit Jesus on his birth? Let's tackle those issues now.

The first thing to understand is that Luke's narrative actually tells the events immediately after Jesus' birth, and Matthew's record tells the events that happened around a year after his birth. Luke starts by saying this:

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luke 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Historians will point out that Cyrenius was not Governor of the province until AD 6. The Romans also collected a tax around AD 6 as well. Let's look at the key verses in other translations, and we can begin to see that this was not the tax event in 3 BC, but rather it was the census, or registration, that had to be done to set the tax rate for each town. Roman law required people to return to their permanent homes for this registration so they could get an accurate tax estimate, so this shows that Joseph planned to move to Bethlehem permanently to live with his wife Mary.

Let's take an extended look at portions of the following freely available essay: (*J.C. Jones, "Solving the Census of Quirinius."*)

"Here's where we get the whole "Census of Quirinius" question in the gospel of Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. (Luke 2:1-6, ESV)

However, this passage will look different depending on what translation you use. That was the ESV. The following are other translations, which change a particular key word:

Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. (Luke 2:1, ASV)

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (Luke 2:1, KJV)

Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. (Luke 2:1, NASB)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (Luke 2:1, NIV)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. (Luke 2:1, CSB)

This lack of consistency demands a second look. The Greek word here is a verb – ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) – present infinitive (middle or passive). The word means to “enroll, to inscribe in a register, or to give a name for a registration.” The noun form is used in Luke 2:2 – ἀπογραφή (apographē).

The early church was almost universal in saying that Jesus was born in a Roman year that corresponds to either 3 BC or 2 BC (*See Jack Finegan, Handbook of Biblical Chronology, Hendrickson Publishers, (2015)*).

We have VERY solid evidence that an ἀπογραφή (apographē) of Judea happened in 6 AD. Even worse, it happened when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

This evidence is based in large part on this following passage from Josephus:

Now Cyrenius, a Roman senator, and one who had gone through other magistracies, and had passed through them till he had been consul, and one who, on other accounts, was of great dignity, came at this time into Syria, with a few others, being sent by Cæsar to be a judge of that nation, and to take an account of their substance. Coponius also, a man of the equestrian order, was sent together with him, to have the supreme power over the Jews. Moreover,

Cyrenius came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria, to take an account of their substance, and to dispose of Archelaus's money; but the Jews, although at the beginning they took the report of a taxation heinously, yet did they leave off any further opposition to it, by the persuasion of Joazar, who was the son of Beethus, and high priest; so they, being over-persuaded by Joazar's words, gave an account of their estates, without any dispute about it. Yet was there one Judas, a Gaulonite, of a city whose name was Gamala, who, taking with him Sadduc, a Pharisee, became zealous to draw them to a revolt, who both said that this taxation was no better than an introduction to slavery, and exhorted the nation to assert their liberty; as if they could procure them happiness and security for what they possessed, and an assured enjoyment of a still greater good, which was that of the honor and glory they would thereby acquire for magnanimity. (Josephus, Antiquities, 18.1.1)

The word that Josephus uses is ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin) which means “pledging of a property, mortgaging” or “a census; valuation” or “tax.”

It is clear from Josephus that this “pledge/census/mortgaging/tax” happened after Herod Archelaus was banished to Vienna, and therefore AFTER the “days of Herod the King” (Josephus, Antiquities, 17.13.2&5)

If there was a tax of Judaea while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and if this tax definitely happened after Archelaus was banished to Vienna, this is YEARS after the death of Herod the King.

Knowing this, then how can the Bible's chronology match up? Isn't there a serious error between Luke and Matthew?

Many people say that Luke made an incredible error in the “census of Quirinius” in Luke 2. For instance, Emil Schürer in his 19th century treatise on the Chronology of the Jewish people in the time of Christ, gives a long discussion of the topic of the “Census of Quirinius” and then concludes the following:

“All ways of escape are closed, and there remains nothing else but to acknowledge that the evangelist has made his statement trusting to imperfect information, so that it is not in accordance with the facts of history.” (Emil Schürer A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, First Edition 1890)

Sounds like a problem, no?

The consistent claim is that Luke made a mistake in his chronology and made errors in his history. It claims he overlooked the details of the ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin) of Quirinius in 6 AD when he wrote of the ἀπογραφὴ (apographē) in Luke 2.

But while it may be easy to say that Luke was “confused” about general history before his time, it becomes more difficult to say that Luke was “confused” about his own writing. The fact of the matter is that Luke knew about the ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin) mentioned by Josephus.

Luke uses the verb ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) and the noun ἀπογραφή (apographē) in Luke 2, but he uses the same noun ἀπογραφή (apographē) in the following passage in Acts:

When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in honor by all the people, stood up and gave orders to put the men outside for a little while. And he said to them, “Men of Israel, take care what you are about to do with these men. For before these days Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and came to nothing. After him Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or this undertaking is of man, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even be found opposing God!” (Acts 5:33-39 ESV)

In this passage, the “census” is the same Greek noun in Luke 2: ἀπογραφή (apographē). But this word clearly refers to the same thing mentioned by Josephus with the word ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin). We know this because both accounts explicitly mention “Judas the Galilean,” who revolted.

Luke is not confused. Instead, it seems we are.

We can see that Luke is not confused when we re-examine the passage in the gospel of Luke:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. (Luke 2:1-2 ESV)

Note that he says this was the FIRST registration, foreshadowing the mention of the second ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin) mentioned in Acts 5.

Earlier, we quoted Emil Schürer, who definitely believed that Luke made an error. He is the “consensus” scholar who believes that Herod the Great died in 4 BC and that Luke made an error.

However, we can use him again to rehabilitate Luke and prove a point that he overlooks (probably because he thought Herod the Great died in 4 BC). It involves the governor of Syria between 3 BC and 2 BC:

During the period B.C. 3-2, there is no direct evidence about any governor of Syria. But it may be concluded with a fair amount of probability from a passage in Tacitus, that about this time P. Sulpicius Quirinius, consul in B.C. 12, was appointed governor of Syria. Tacitus in the Annals, iii. 48, expressly records the death of Quirinius in A.D. 21 (coss. Tiber. iv., Drus. ii.) . . . Quirinius must therefore have been then governor of that province to which the Homonadensians belonged, or from which the war against them proceeded. Seeing that the Homonadensians occupied the Taurus Mountains, we might have to do with the provinces of Asia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Cilicia, Syria. But of these the first three must be at once set aside, because they had no legions, so that their governors could not carry on a war. And further, Cilicia was probably at that time only a part of the province of Syria . . The only conclusion then that remains is that Quirinius . . . was governor of Syria. (*Emil Schürer A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, First Edition 1890*)

Therefore, it is clear that while Quirinius was governor of Syria in 6 AD, he was also governor of Syria in 3 BC – 2 BC as well.

Above, we saw the difference in translation of ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) in Luke 2:1 among several different Bible translations.

You can see the same variety of the noun ἀπογραφὴ (apographē) in the translation of Luke 2:2:

This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. (Luke 2:2, ESV)

This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. (Luke 2:2, ASV)

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. (Luke 2:2, NASB)

This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. (Luke 2:2, CSB)

(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) (Luke 2:2, KJV)

Just like before, the word and ἀπογραφὴ (apographē) continues to see variety in translation, mirroring the translation of ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) in Luke 2:1.

But I'm here to make a separate point. The part of this verse that stays the same – “Quirinius was governor of Syria” is not as straightforward as it appears. This point is highly technical, so get ready.

The Greek sentence in Luke 2:2 is as follows:

αὕτη ἀπογραφή πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου

This registration first took place [when] was commanding the Syria Quirinius

That verb ἡγεμονεύοντος (hēgemoneuontos) means “to command” or “to govern,” and it is conjugated as Present Participle Active – Genitive Masculine Singular.

A participle is basically a verbal adjective. In English, it would be something like “The running man was dressed in black.” The word “run” is a verb, even though here it modifies “man” like an adjective.

This Greek word is also in the Genitive case. The Genitive case indicates possession, among other things. In English, we indicate possession with words like your, my, his, and her, even with verbs. Consider the phrase: “My running was slower than I wanted.” The word “my” shows possession of the verb “running.” In Greek, this was accomplished with conjugation rather than an extra word.

But here's where things get complicated. Luke is written in Koine Greek. At this period of the Greek language, an entirely different case that existed in Attic Greek had disappeared. It was called the “ablative case.” As Wikipedia explains:

In Ancient Greek, there was an ablative case ἀφαιρετική afairetikē which was used in the Homeric, pre-Mycenaean, and Mycenaean periods. It fell into disuse during the classical period and thereafter with some of its functions taken by the genitive and others by the dative; the genitive had functions belonging to the Proto-Indo-European genitive and ablative cases. The genitive case with the prepositions ἀπό από “away from” and ἐκ/ἐξ ek/ex “out of” is an example.

That may be confusing, so let's just compare it to English. The Ablative is used to denote the relations expressed in English by the prepositions from; in, at; with, and by. Similarly, it shows how Greek prepositions “away from” and “out of” can communicate an Ablative case from a Genitive verb in Koine Greek.

You can see why the ablative may not be used that much. For instance, what would be the difference between “shouting FROM me” [ablative] and “MY shouting” [genitive]? What is the difference between “running WITH my legs” [ablative] and “MY running” [genitive]? What is the difference between “the home OUT OF WHICH I live” [ablative] and “MY home” [genitive]?

Ninety-nine percent of the time, they mean exactly the same thing. So, just as the older English word “thou” got subsumed into the modern “you,” Greek speakers by the Koine Greek period decided that they just didn’t need the Ablative case. So it got subsumed into the Genitive.

But this sentence in Luke 2:2 just might be that 1 % of the time where the difference between the Ablative and Genitive makes a difference. Here is the key:

“Quirinius was governor of Syria” is a Genitive translation of the Koine Greek phrase in Luke 2:2 mentioned above. But that is not the only possible translation. “Quirinius was governing FROM Syria” and “Quirinius was governing OUT OF Syria” are possible Ablative translations of the same Greek phrase.

Why does this matter?... Quirinius between 3 BC and 2 BC was commanding legions against the Homonadensians, as we learned from Emil Schürer. He did it while he was “governor OF Syria.” To do so, he would have to go FROM Syria and TO the Taurus Mountains. Therefore, Quirinius must have been “governing” or “commanding” or “hēgemoneuontos-ing” OUT OF Syria and into modern-day Turkey. See below:

This necessarily implicates an ablative meaning of the Greek Verb ἡγεμονεύοντος (hēgemoneuontos), which English translations have consistently translated in a genitive way.

But did you catch the second detail about the second ἀπογραφὴ (apographē) mentioned by Luke in Acts 5, which was the same the ἀποτίμησιν (apotímesin) mentioned by Josephus? Look what it said:

Moreover, Cyrenius came himself into Judea, which was now added to the province of Syria (Josephus, Antiquities 18.1.1)

Contrary to the FIRST tax/census/registration/enrollment, in the SECOND tax/census/registration/enrollment, Quirinius was PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN JUDEA. That would have been a big deal at the time, and a clear historical marker in the mind of his readers.

This is the historical detail that Luke is showing his readers. We have been missing it the whole time.

But this still leaves some questions:

1. Why was there a big revolt in the second ἀπογραφὴ (apographē), but barely a historical blip in the first ἀπογραφὴ (apographē)?
2. Also, why on Earth would Joseph need to travel to Bethlehem with Mary to participate in the first ἀπογραφὴ (apographē)?
3. Did they not have mail or a courier?
4. Do you have to show up in person to pay taxes?

5. Isn't that wildly impractical?
6. How does any of this make sense?

Actually, it makes TOTAL sense, and this detail explains the whole discrepancy.

The system worked as follows. Roman officials would estimate the approximate tax to be extracted from a region. Next, they would host an auction to give away the rights to collect this money on their behalf. This would be attended by publicani, or private contractors, . . . Here at the auction, let's say that the government said they want to collect one million sestertii. What would happen is these publicani would come in and say "I would be able to collect 1.1 million sestertii." Another would say "I would be able to collect 1.2 million sestertii." And then, whoever basically had the highest bid, well, they would win the contract. *(Peter Tremin. The Roman Market Economy. Princeton Press (2013)) (M.I. Finley. The Ancient Economy. University of California Press (1999)) (Keith Hopkins, "Taxes and Trade in the Roman Empire (200 BC – 400 AD)," The Journal of Roman Studies, Vol. 70, Nov. 1980 (pp.101 – 125))*

And now what would happen is that they would have the government backing to go ahead and collect those taxes.

That is basic Roman history from a non-Biblical-studies perspective, but the information makes TOTAL sense when you apply it to Luke 2:1-2, Acts 5:37 in the Bible, and Josephus.

The first ἀπογραφή (apographē) was when Roman officials (in this case, Herod the Great, whose throne was granted by Caesar Augustus himself) merely did some prep work to figure out how much wealth was in the region. Or as the quote said "estimate the approximate tax to be extracted from a region."

The second ἀπογραφή (apographē) was the actual collection of the tax after the publicani bid on the rights and were able to collect the tax with the backing of Rome.

...

And finally, why does history not record this event? That's easy, too.

If you live in the United States, you know what happens on April 15, don't you? That's when you have to pay your taxes. But do you know when the local tax assessor updates the property values of real property in your county? I didn't think so.

What was true for Judea in 6 AD is true for citizens of the United States today. It's the PAYING that everyone cares about, not the ASSESSING.

Conclusion

The Census of Quirinius is not as hard as it seems. The problem comes from a modern view of an ancient taxing system. There was not a single meaning to the Greek word ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai). This word can be any particular part of the taxation process in the Roman world, either assessing property values or actually levying a tax.

The first ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) happened when Quirinius was governor OF Syria and commanding legions FROM Syria. The second ἀπογράφεσθαι (apographesthai) happened when Quirinius was governor OF Syrian and governing FROM Judea.

And that's how the Census of Quirinius works.”

Having resolved the history, let's look at the Biblical accounts in Luke and Matthew, which many claim contradict. We will see this is mainly because popular culture and nativity scenes have infiltrated the church consciousness and many poor assumptions have been made as a result. Recall any nativity scene. Are there three wise men, known as the magi, standing in the manger looking down on an infant Jesus? That is a perfect example of how culture overrides the scripture in people's minds. The wise men were never at the manger. We will show this as we compare Matthew and Luke's account. There is more of a story being told here than what is commonly thought. Let's return to Luke and refresh our minds on the birth account.

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Luke 2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

Luke 2:5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Luke 2:6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

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

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

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

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

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

Luke 2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Luke 2:15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

Luke 2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

Luke 2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

Luke 2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luke 2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

There were no wise men at the manger. The shepherds came after receiving the sign from the angel, and they made it known the savior of the world had come.

In Matthew, there is no manger scene.

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.

Matthew is the one who gave us the genealogy of Joseph, and he also gives us Joseph's experience leading up to the birth of Christ. Matthew will discuss the wise men in the next chapter, but here is where we must return to Luke to see the events immediately after Jesus' birth.

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

Luke 2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

Luke 2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

Luke 2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

Luke 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Luke 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Luke 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Luke 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Luke 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

Luke 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Luke 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

Luke 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke 2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

Luke 2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Luke 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Luke 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Luke 2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary followed the Mosaic Law, Jesus was circumcised when he was eight days old. Mary's purification time also coincided with this timeline as women were ritually unclean for seven days after the birth of a male. After the seven days, the child was circumcised, and then the purification period would continue another 33 days. After this period of purification was past, Jesus was taken to the temple. This was necessary because Jesus was the first born. Here are the relevant scriptures for circumcision, the period of purification, and presenting the first born:

Leviticus 12:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Leviticus 12:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.

Leviticus 12:3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Leviticus 12:4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

Leviticus 12:5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.

Leviticus 12:6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a

turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:

Leviticus 12:7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.

Leviticus 12:8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

Exodus 13:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

Exodus 13:2 Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

Exodus 13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:

Exodus 13:15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem.

Exodus 13:16 And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

There is a time jump in between verse 38 and 39. Most translations will put a paragraph marker here; it is how Luke bridges us over to the next account when Jesus was twelve years old. Verse 39 of Luke 2 says they returned to Nazareth, and they did, but that is not all that occurred before Joseph took his family to Nazareth.

Matthew records what takes place between verse 38 and 39 of Luke 2.

Matthew 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

Matthew 2:2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

Notice that it was only after Jesus was born, the wise men came from the east. It is unclear exactly how long this journey took, but based on some of the signs we previously discussed, it seems it would have been over a year since the birth.

The wise men create a stir in Jerusalem, and Herod is unnerved by the news that a King of the Jews had been born.

Matthew 2:3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Matthew 2:4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

Matthew 2:5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

Matthew 2:6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Matthew 2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

Matthew 2:8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

Matthew 2:9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

Matthew 2:10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

As we can see, the wise men followed the star as they made their way to Bethlehem. Bethlehem lies six miles south of Jerusalem, so this is when the star had ceased its Eastward movement. If Jupiter was the star that led the wise men to Jesus, then it is likely they arrived and met Jesus during the Feast of Dedication (Chanukah) that took place from December 23rd to 30th, 2 BC. This feast is not in the Law of Moses, but rather celebrated the restoration of the temple after it had been desolate following the defilement by the Seleucids. Let's look at the following quote:

“Interestingly, while Jupiter was in its “standing still” position over Bethlehem, the Sun was also “standing still.” All know that December 25 is in the usual period of the Winter Solstice. The word “solstice” means “Sun stands still.” These stationary coincidences of Jupiter and the Sun are quite related, and would surely have appeared significant to astrologers at the time. Cumont has the following evaluation,

“General observance required that on the 25th of December the birth of the ‘new Sun’ should be celebrated, when after the winter solstice, the days began to lengthen and the invincible star triumphed again over darkness.”

Recall that even Luke said at the beginning of his Gospel that “the dayspring from on high has visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness.” The Magi, being astrologers, would no doubt have wanted to give gifts to the “newborn Sun,” and in the book of Malachi the God of Israel is called “the Sun of Righteousness.” They would have supposed that the child in their midst was the one destined to usher in the new Golden Age that most were then expecting.

Professor Eliade, whom many consider to have been the foremost authority on the past and present religious customs of peoples has shown that the ancients looked on the dawning of each New Year (the Solstice period) as symbolic of the inauguration of a new age. The Magi would have been aware of these well-known beliefs. Here they were, after making their long journey with expensive gifts to give to the newborn king, now discovering from their point of view that the Sun (the Supreme Father) was “standing still” in the heavens while Jupiter (the King planet) was also “standing still.” These features could perfectly fit Matthew’s account.

Thus, the Magi being Gentiles would have approached this astronomical relationship from their own religious point of view. Almost all non-Jewish societies placed great emphasis on the occasion of the re-birth of the “Sun God” at each Winter Solstice and they had many religious celebrations to accompany it. Jews, however, would not have viewed this season of the year in that fashion. Most Jews at the time abhorred these Gentile religious festivals at the Winter Solstice or any other seasons of the year. They could point to the prophet Jeremiah who commanded the Jews never to adhere to Gentile religious customs involving the various solstice or equinox seasons of the year. The Jews considered these to be Gentile practices.

The Jews in Jerusalem would have looked on these astronomical signs in 3/2 B.C.E. very differently. In fact, December 25th in 2 B.C.E. was not a time of solstice celebrations to the Jews. Remarkably, however, it was a period for great festivity throughout the whole of the Jewish nation. It happened to be the precise time for their feast of Hanukkah (sometimes spelled Chanukkah). This was a feast of the Jews held near the beginning of winter and it is mentioned in the New Testament as “the Feast of Dedication.” The start of the eight days celebration can sometimes occur as early as November 28th or as late as December 27th on our solar calendar. The Jewish months can vary at times as much as a month out of phase with the solar calendar that we use today. But in the year 2 B.C.E., it is evident that Hanukkah began on December 23rd. The Magi would have given their gifts to the newborn babe on the third day of the Jewish festival. This would have been an interesting and symbolic time to present their gifts to the one they considered to be the messianic king that the Jewish nation was then expecting to appear. This was because Hanukkah was a time for gift giving.

This feast of Hanukkah was not ordained in the Old Testament but all Jews held it in high esteem. It took on a secular and religious importance that was second only to the Passover season. It commemorated the time in 164 B.C.E. when the temple had been cleansed of Gentile idols placed there by Antiochus Epiphanes. The temple had been desolate of its holiness for three years, but in the Jewish month of Kislev, on the 25th day of the month, the

Maccabees once again established the temple services. That particular day and the seven days that followed were reckoned as days of celebration for the Jewish triumph over what they considered to be paganism and heathen idolatry. The Jewish symbolism associated with these days is the very antithesis of what the Gentile nations were emphasizing at their Winter Solstice celebrations, which probably included the symbolic beliefs that the Magi themselves adhered to in their role as priests.

Hanukkah was considered a festival of Dedication (or rather, of Re-dedication) of the temple and Jewish people to the God of Abraham and Moses. For this reason it became known as a “festival of renewal.” From the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. onward, the Jews regularly assembled each year at that time in the temple or their synagogues. They carried branches of trees and palms in their hands, singing psalms to God for the great salvation which they considered they had been given. They looked on Hanukkah as a second feast of Tabernacles which symbolized the redemption of the Jews and the entire world to God. No fast or mourning because of any calamity or bereavement was permitted to be initiated during those eight days. It was a time of festivity and celebration. The temple, synagogues and all houses in the nation were lighted both within and without by many lamps and torches during the whole period. Josephus, for this reason, called the festival “the Feast of Lamps.””

- *E. L. Martin, The Star that Astonished the World, Chapter 4*

The point of this quote is not to encourage an observance of December 25th, this was clearly a day held in high esteem by pagans, and it was certainly not the birthday of Christ. On the contrary, on this day on which the highest pagan god’s birth was honored, the sun god, this young baby was honored and recognized as the King, leaving no doubt Jesus Christ holds all honor and glory. It also shows the circumstances of the visit of the wise men, and the conclusions they may have come to when they honored Jesus. Remember, unlike the shepherds, the Bible has no mention of any word from God coming to the wise men before they arrived in Bethlehem. In a demonstration of faith, these pagan astrologers laid their precious gifts before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God honored their sacrifice, and sent his angel to warn them, saving them from certain death at the hands of Herod.

Matthew 2:11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Matthew 2:12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Matthew 2:13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

Matthew 2:14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:

Matthew 2:15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Notice when the wise men arrive, Jesus and his family are in a house, not a manger. This is because they lived in Bethlehem during this time. Not only did they live in a house, it seems possible the wise men stayed with them in the house, being warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod. If these events all took place during that night, then they left before Joseph woke up, because Joseph was also told in a dream after the wise men left, that he should take his family into Egypt.

It makes perfect sense they lived in Bethlehem at this time, Joseph was from Nazareth, but Mary lived in Bethlehem. Remember when Mary visited Elisabeth when she was pregnant? It says Mary was able to travel quickly, by herself, to Elisabeth's house. That is not an easy trip for a young girl had she been traveling from Nazareth, and would have taken four days moving a normal pace for the time. Remember Joseph traveled to Bethlehem in order to register for the census in the town he was going to live after their betrothal.

Matthew 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

Matthew 2:17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

Matthew 2:18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Herod, inspired by hatred and jealousy, sends a command to kill all children two years old and younger. We can further verify the time frame, however, because of this vile command. If Jesus was just a newborn when the wise men arrived, then why would he include two-year-olds in his order? It was because, at this point, Jesus was not yet two as we figure age, but he was in his second year of life (recall our discussion of age earlier.)

Matthew 2:19 But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

Matthew 2:20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

Matthew 2:21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Matthew 2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

Matthew 2:23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

After the death of Herod, Joseph still did not feel safe returning to their home in Judea, so he decided to return to where he formerly lived, Nazareth. And thus, Jesus was known as coming from Nazareth, rather than His birthplace, Bethlehem.

In summary let's go over Jesus' birth with some bullet points:

- **The Roman census required everyone go to the town in which they lived.**
- **Joseph decided to take the census in Bethlehem, since his intention was to live there with his wife, Mary.**
- **Jesus is born in a manger because there is no inn (guest chamber) open to them, they do not yet have a house together.**
- **Angels declare the birth of Jesus to the shepherds nearby, the shepherds visit Jesus in the manger.**
- **Wise men from the East see the signs in the heavens, know that a King is born, and follow the star moving west to Jerusalem.**
- **The wise men arrive during the Feast of Dedication over one year after Jesus is born and speak to Herod in 2 BC.**
- **The wise men bring their precious gifts to Jesus in his house in Bethlehem.**
- **The wise men are warned to leave another way, and Joseph is warned to flee to Egypt.**
- **Herod orders the slaughter of the innocents.**
- **Herod dies in 1 BC.**
- **Joseph is told to return to Israel, and fearing to return to Judea, returns to Nazareth**

This is the complete timeline of Jesus birth according to scripture. As we have learned, there is no contradiction, and the timing of events align with scriptural, historical, and scientific evidence.

The Timeline of Jesus Ministry

Having established that Jesus ministry began in AD 27, it is therefore easy to know how long Jesus' ministry was if we know the date of His crucifixion. Fortunately, there are reliable ways to determine when the crucifixion took place. For one, we know due to the account of the Gospel writers the year Jesus died, Passover took place on a Wednesday. Using astronomical data, we can see the only year that aligns with this fact is AD 31. We will demonstrate how this works in the following section.

Knowing that Jesus would have entered His 30th year September of AD 27, and that He was crucified AD 31 on Passover, we arrive at the traditional 3 ½ year ministry period. This is a very significant timeframe in scripture, as it occurs in one form or another several times, especially in prophecy. Here is a list of scriptures that refer to a 3 ½ year period, or 1260 days. (Recall the original calendar observed before Moses had twelve thirty-day months, or 360 days in a year. Three and a half 360-day years is equal to 1260 days. Sometimes referred to as 3.5 “times,” 42 months, or 1260 days.)

Daniel 7:23-27

Daniel 12:7

Luke 4:25

James 5:17

Revelation 11:1-3

Revelation 12:5-6

Revelation 12:13-14

Revelation 13:3-8

This is not an exhaustive list of all possible connections to 3 ½ years in the Bible, but it is enough to establish that this is a significant period of time. It is not in the scope of this study to determine what the significance is, but occurrence of it shows significance of some kind. In the next section we will discuss proofs for the AD 31 crucifixion date, but before we examine that topic further, it is important to note the intent of the Gospel writers was not to give an exhaustive list of events that took place during Jesus’ ministry, he no doubt said and did many of the same things several times as he preached throughout Judea and Israel. Many people were healed who never got “screen time,” so to speak, in the Biblical narrative. The writers did not all record the same events, nor always in chronological order. It is impossible to know when exactly many of these events took place.

According to John’s Gospel, Jesus’ ministry included at least three annual Feasts of Passover through the course of His ministry: one in John 2:13, another in 6:4, and then the Passover of His crucifixion in 11:55–57. Because of the number of things that Jesus accomplished and the places He traveled during His ministry, many scholars believe there was another Passover, not mentioned in the Gospels, which fell between the Passovers of John 2 and John 6. This would lengthen Jesus’ ministry to at least 3 years.

In Daniel chapter 9, it says the Messiah will be “cut off” after 69 “weeks” (the word used for weeks means a group of seven. This can be understood as groups of seven years.) 69 times 7 is 483. The beginning of the timeframe is the command to rebuild Jerusalem, which is recorded in Nehemiah chapter 2. This took place during the 20th year of Artaxerxes, which took place in 445 BC. If you count 483 Biblical years (360 days, not 365.25 days) and add them to the 445 BC date, you arrive at AD 31 during the month of Nisan (483 Biblical years is equal to 476 standard solar years.) This is yet more evidence for the AD 31 crucifixion date, and even more will be shared further in this study.

Let's take a closer look at the final week of Jesus life before the crucifixion.

Thursday, April 19th AD 31 (Julian)

John 12:1 Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

John 12:2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

John 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

John 12:4 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

John 12:5 Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

John 12:6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

John 12:7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

John 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

This was Judas' "last straw" moment. Jesus was talking about dying, not fulfilling Judas' wishes of wealth and power. Sometime between this moment and Passover, Judas snuck away and arranged for the betrayal of Jesus. Mark and Matthew parenthetically show this event when they record the plotting of the Sanhedrin to kill Jesus in chapters 14 and 26 respectively. That event is linked to this anointing because Judas gave them access to Jesus in a private location under the cover of darkness. All three of these accounts are of the same event, but John gives more detail about who started complaining (Judas.) Therefore, Jesus did indeed have his head and feet anointed at this time, the head anointing may have not been recorded by John because it had already been recorded by others.

Mark 14:10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

Mark 14:11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

Friday, April 20th AD 31 (Julian)

John 12:12 On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

John 12:13 Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

John 12:14 And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

John 12:15 Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

John 12:16 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

Luke 19:35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

Luke 19:36 And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

Luke 19:37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

Luke 19:38 Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

Luke 19:39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

Luke 19:40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

Luke 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Luke 19:42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

Luke 19:43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

Luke 19:44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

At the end of the passage from Luke, Jesus is telling the Pharisees that Jerusalem will be destroyed because they did not believe in Him. This judgement was fulfilled in AD 70. Many know about the AD 70 date, but they do not realize the scale of the destruction, the siege prior to destruction, the conditions inside the city, or the number of those who died.

“(403) So the Romans being now become masters of the wars, they both placed their ensigns upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had

gained, as having found the end of this war much lighter than its beginning; for when they had gotten upon the last was, without any bloodshed, they could hardly believe what they found to be true; but seeing nobody to oppose them, they stood in doubt what such an unusual solitude could mean. (404) But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city, with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook, without mercy, and set fire to the houses wither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; (405) and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching anything. (406) But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the houses was quenched with these men's blood. (407) And truly so it happened, that though the slayers left off at the evening, yet did the fire greatly prevail in the night, and as all was burning, came that eighth day of the month Gorpheus [Elul] upon Jerusalem; (408) a city that had been liable to so many miseries during the siege, that, had it always enjoyed as much happiness from its first foundation, it would certainly have been the envy of the world. Nor did it on any other account so much deserve these sore misfortunes, as by producing such a generation of men as were the occasions of this its overthrow."

- Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Chapter 8

Josephus records over one million Jews perished in the city. The Romans made an example of them, but in reality, it was the fulfillment of prophecy. In another place in his record of Jewish wars, Josephus tells of the cannibalism that took place in Jerusalem during the siege, including the story of a woman eating her infant son. The valley of Hinnom was stacked with piles of corpses thrown over the walls.

An often-underappreciated part of Jesus ministry was the prophecy of Judgement on Old Jerusalem, and the connection with Judas, the priests, broken pottery, Baal worship, killing of innocents, and the valley of the son of Hinnom, also known as the valley of slaughter or the field of blood.

Acts 1:15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

Acts 1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

Acts 1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

Acts 1:18 Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

Acts 1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

Acts 1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Peter speaks to the disciples about replacing Judas, quoting Psalm 109. Notice that “desolation” is in view. Let’s look at Psalm 109:

Psalm 109:6 Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand.

Psalm 109:7 When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin.

Psalm 109:8 Let his days be few; and let another take his office.

Psalm 109:9 Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

Psalm 109:10 Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

Psalm 109:11 Let the extortioner catch all that he hath; and let the strangers spoil his labour.

Psalm 109:12 Let there be none to extend mercy unto him: neither let there be any to favour his fatherless children.

Psalm 109:13 Let his posterity be cut off; and in the generation following let their name be blotted out.

Psalm 109:14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered with the LORD; and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.

Psalm 109:15 Let them be before the LORD continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth.

Psalm 109:16 Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart.

Psalm 109:17 As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him.

Psalm 109:18 As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones.

Psalm 109:19 Let it be unto him as the garment which covereth him, and for a girdle wherewith he is girded continually.

Once again, utter desolation is in view, the sin unforgiveable, and girdle wrapped around him continually. Judas, of course, hanged himself.

Matthew 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

Matthew 27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

Matthew 27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Matthew 27:6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

Matthew 27:7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Matthew 27:8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Matthew 27:9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

Matthew 27:10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

Let's compare these scriptures with some passages from Zechariah and Jeremiah.

Zechariah 11:4 Thus saith the LORD my God; Feed the flock of the slaughter;

Zechariah 11:5 Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the LORD; for I am rich: and their own shepherds pity them not.

Zechariah 11:6 For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD: but, lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of his king: and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.

Zechariah 11:7 And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock. And I took unto me two staves; the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands; and I fed the flock.

Zechariah 11:8 Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul lothed them, and their soul also abhorred me.

Zechariah 11:9 Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.

Zechariah 11:10 And I took my staff, even Beauty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.

Zechariah 11:11 And it was broken in that day: and so the poor of the flock that waited upon me knew that it was the word of the LORD.

Zechariah 11:12 And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver.

Zechariah 11:13 And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prised at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.

Zechariah 11:14 Then I cut asunder mine other staff, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

Jeremiah 7 also gives a prophecy of this final judgement on Jerusalem, and includes the passage Jesus references when he drives out the merchants from the temple (Mark 11:17.)

Jeremiah 7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not;

Jeremiah 7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?

Jeremiah 7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 7:14 Therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.

Jeremiah 7:15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.

Jeremiah 7:16 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.

Jeremiah 7:27 Therefore thou shalt speak all these words unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee.

Jeremiah 7:28 But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the LORD their God, nor receiveth correction: truth is perished, and is cut off from their mouth.

Jeremiah 7:29 Cut off thine hair, O Jerusalem, and cast it away, and take up a lamentation on high places; for the LORD hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.

Jeremiah 7:30 For the children of Judah have done evil in my sight, saith the LORD: they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to pollute it.

Jeremiah 7:31 And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.

Jeremiah 7:32 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor the valley of the son of Hinnom, but the valley of slaughter: for they shall bury in Tophet, till there be no place.

Jeremiah 7:33 And the carcases of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth; and none shall fray them away.

Jeremiah 7:34 Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate.

Jeremiah 18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying,

Jeremiah 18:2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

Jeremiah 18:3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

Jeremiah 18:4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Jeremiah 18:15 Because my people hath forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths, to walk in paths, in a way not cast up;

Jeremiah 18:16 To make their land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished, and wag his head.

Jeremiah 18:17 I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will shew them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.

Jeremiah 18:18 Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words.

Jeremiah 18:19 Give heed to me, O LORD, and hearken to the voice of them that contend with me.

Jeremiah 18:20 Shall evil be recompensed for good? for they have digged a pit for my soul. Remember that I stood before thee to speak good for them, and to turn away thy wrath from them.

Jeremiah 18:21 Therefore deliver up their children to the famine, and pour out their blood by the force of the sword; and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and be widows; and let their men be put to death; let their young men be slain by the sword in battle.

Jeremiah 19:1 Thus saith the LORD, Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people, and of the ancients of the priests;

Jeremiah 19:2 And go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom, which is by the entry of the east gate, and proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee,

Jeremiah 19:3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle.

Jeremiah 19:4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents;

Jeremiah 19:5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind:

Jeremiah 19:6 Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that this place shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter.

Jeremiah 19:7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place; and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies, and by the hands of them that seek their lives: and their carcasses will I give to be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth.

Jeremiah 19:8 And I will make this city desolate, and an hissing; every one that passeth thereby shall be astonished and hiss because of all the plagues thereof.

Jeremiah 19:9 And I will cause them to eat the flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and they shall eat every one the flesh of his friend in the siege and straitness, wherewith their enemies, and they that seek their lives, shall straiten them.

Jeremiah 19:10 Then shalt thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee,

Jeremiah 19:11 And shalt say unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again: and they shall bury them in Tophet, till there be no place to bury.

Saturday, April 21st AD 31 (Julian)

Jesus returned to the city the next day and cursed the fig tree:

Matthew 21:18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered.

Matthew 21:19 And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

Matthew 21:20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!

Matthew 21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Matthew 21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

As he often did, Jesus then went to teach on the sabbath day.

Matthew 21:23 And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

Matthew 21:24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

Matthew 21:25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

Matthew 21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

Matthew 21:27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Jesus tells many parables in the temple before addressing the pharisees. He describes eight woes against them and makes reference to judgement and desolation, once again bringing the coming judgement of AD 70 into view.

Matthew 23:31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Matthew 23:32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Matthew 23:34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

Matthew 23:35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

Matthew 23:36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Matthew 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Jesus then holds a famous conversation with His disciples after leaving the temple. This is recorded in Mark 13, Matthew 24, and Luke 21. No surprise, desolation of the temple is once again a topic. Jesus prophesied about the destruction of Jerusalem, and how terrible of a time it would be. He did not want His children to be in Jerusalem when it occurred.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

Luke 21:21 Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

Matthew 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Matthew 24:16 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains:

Mark 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

Luke, Matthew and Mark, describe the same event, but Luke does not include the reference to Daniel, but gives a more literal description of what was coming. Although many have opinions on Daniel chapter 9, the desolation described there is consistent with the desolation described in all of the scriptures we have shown. The association with the judgement on Israel, brought about due to the unrepentant killing and persecution of not *only* the prophets (like in Jeremiah 18) but also the Apostles and the Christians that would preach the Gospel *after* Jesus. Jesus was not even holding the people accountable for His own death, (Judas notwithstanding,) but rather for the deaths of His chosen servants.

Sunday, April 22nd AD 31 (Julian)

After teaching the disciples in Luke 21, Jesus leaves the city after teaching all day at the temple, and rested in the mount of Olives. In the morning, people came to hear him.

Luke 21:37 And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

Luke 21:38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Although there is no narrative transition between Matthew 24 and Matthew 25, the teachings contained in Matthew 25 likely happen during this discourse on the mount of Olives, taking the end of Luke 21 into account.

Matthew 26:1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

Matthew 26:2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Matthew 26:3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

Matthew 26:4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.

Matthew 26:5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Jesus tells His disciples after two days, Monday and Tuesday, is the Passover, which fell on Wednesday. Matthew then records the account of the priests meeting to discuss capturing Jesus. They needed to act quickly because Passover was drawing close, and they did not want to take Jesus during the feast. Matthew does record all of the events of this week chronologically. The scriptures say "Now when Jesus was in Bethany," in verse six. This lets us know things that transpired previously, giving context for what he just mentioned. Matthew records Jesus anointing and Judas' deal at this time.

Monday, April 23rd AD 31 (Julian)

At this point, the time was fast approaching that Jesus would be crucified. Remember, in the scripture and according to the Jewish reckoning of days, the new day starts in the evening. On the evening of Monday, Jesus was only 24 hours away from the day he would be crucified. This is likely when this event in John 12 occurred, because after this, Jesus hid himself from the people:

John 12:20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

John 12:21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

John 12:22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

John 12:23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

John 12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

John 12:25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

John 12:26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

John 12:36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

Tuesday, April 24thAD 31 (Julian)

Mark 14:12 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover?

Mark 14:13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.

Mark 14:14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

Mark 14:15 And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

Mark 14:16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Now the studios among you will recall that the Feast of Unleavened Bread technically started with an annual sabbath on the day immediately *after* Passover. It is important to understand at this time, the entire timeframe of Passover, and the time of unleavened bread afterward, was all considered part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Mark even includes *the day before Passover* in this timeframe. It's important to stay focused on the facts, and not get caught up in terminology. Jesus, as he had always done, was going to abide by the Law of Moses.

Mark 14:17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

Mark 14:18 And as they sat and did eat, ...

Tuesday evening was the beginning of Passover, as it signaled the start of the 14th day of Nisan, the Passover. Let's move on to the next day.

Wednesday, April 25th AD 31 (Julian)

Luke 22:14 And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

Luke 22:15 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

Luke 22:16 For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Jesus at the Passover with His disciples in the evening, as soon as the hour of the Passover had come.

Matthew 26:20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

Matthew 26:21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

Matthew 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Matthew 26:23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

Matthew 26:24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Matthew 26:25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Matthew gives a rather condensed version of events. Let's add some more detail from the other Gospels.

John 13:2 And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God;

John 13:4 He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

John 13:5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

John 13:21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

John 13:22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

John 13:23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

John 13:24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

John 13:25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

John 13:26 Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

John 13:27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

John 13:28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

John 13:29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

John 13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

After they ate the Passover supper, Jesus washed His disciples' feet and then began to testify that one of them would betray Him. All the disciples questioned who it could be, but Jesus only told John, who asked Him while leaning against His chest. Jesus answered in a whisper, because the others were not able to hear. Jesus passed the sop (bread dipped in some of the broth) and gave it to Judas. Judas left and the disciples had no idea where he went. Remember, the Passover day was not a sabbath, but the day after was, therefore they supposed he may have gone to purchase something.

After Judas left, the meal winding down, and the disciple's feet washed, Jesus began His lesson about eating His flesh, and drinking His Blood.

Matthew 26:26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matthew 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Matthew 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Matthew 26:30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

It is at this point the Gospel of John records an incredible lesson Jesus teaches about many things involving the Holy Spirit that we would send back after He would leave this world. He tells His disciples not to be troubled, though troubled they would be.

Still under cover of darkness, Jesus and His disciples leave the upper room and go to Gethsemane in the mount of Olives. There Jesus takes Peter, James, and John with Him deeper into the Garden.

Matthew 26:36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

Matthew 26:37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Matthew 26:38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

The disciples were not able to stay awake so late in the night after their meal, and Jesus returned from praying to find them sleeping. As He acknowledged them, Judas came to betray Him.

John 18:2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

John 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Matthew 26:48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Luke 22:47 ... Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

Matthew 26:49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

Luke 22:48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

John 18:4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

John 18:5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

Matthew 26:50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

Jesus is taken in the night to stand before the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas. There really should not have been two high priests, as the office was until death, but because of the political corruption of the time, Annas was previously deposed by Valerius and His son-in-law Caiaphas was the new high priest (*Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews XX, 9.1.*)

John 18:13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father in law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

John 18:24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

After standing before the high priest, Jesus was taken to the Roman authority, Pontius Pilate. By this time, it was beginning to be daylight.

Matthew 27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

Matthew 27:2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

After Pilot questions Jesus he learns Jesus was from Galilee and sends Him to Herod Antipus, the son of Herod the Great. This was the same Herod that had executed John the Baptist (*Jeffers, James S. (2000). The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity.*)

Luke 23:6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean.

Luke 23:7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

Though Jesus answered questions from Pilot and the priests, He said not one word to Herod.

Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Luke 23:9 Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

Luke 23:10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

Luke 23:11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

Luke 23:12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Once Pilot had received Jesus once again, he then sought to release Him. Pilot's own wife experienced a terrible dream about Jesus and sent a letter begging her husband to have nothing to do with Jesus (Matthew 27:19.) Due to the custom of the feast, Pilot offered Barabbas and Jesus to the crowd. Pilot had expected them to choose Jesus, and did not want to execute this innocent man, so he asked the people once more, but again they cried for Jesus to be crucified.

John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

John 19:2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

John 19:3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

John 19:4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

John 19:5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

John 19:6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

John 19:7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

John 19:8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

John 19:9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

John 19:10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

John 19:11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

John 19:12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

John 19:13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

John 19:14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

John 19:15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

John repeatedly uses Roman time when describing when events take place. John says that this was the sixth hour of the day. In Jewish culture, an "hour of the day" was the hour of daylight after the sun came up. John records Pilate delivering Jesus to be crucified "about the sixth hour". But that doesn't seem to fit in with the other gospels. Jesus was already hanging on the cross by then and darkness coming over the land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour (Luke 23:44.) Mark shows us Jesus was nailed to the cross on the third hour.

If you think John used the Jewish method of recording time, then you are in trouble here. John is using the Roman method of counting time. So, according to John, Pilate's proclamation "Behold your King," happens around six in the morning, not midday (as would be required using the Jewish method.) Instead of disagreeing with the other gospels, John's statement affirms them. All the Gospel accounts record the trials of Jesus taking place in the early hours. John uses this terminology "early" in 18:28 and 20:1. Both of these refer to a pre-sunrise time period. Similar is the use of the word "morning" in Mark 15:1. This is used to refer to the pre-sunrise period in the same way John uses the term "early." Morning in Mark, and early in John, are actually the same Greek word *proi*, which in Biblical usage includes the fourth watch period of the night, from around 3am to 6am.

Mark 15:22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

Mark 15:23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

Mark 15:24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

Mark 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was crucified 9 AM, Wednesday, April 25th AD 31.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus

Astronomical records account for a perfect date for the crucifixion of Jesus, in which the Passover would have fallen on Wednesday, April 25th 31 AD on the Julian Calendar (April 23rd on the Gregorian calendar retroactively calculated.)

The Spring new moon of AD 31 occurred scientifically on Tuesday, April 10th around 2 PM in Jerusalem. The new moon had to be observed in order to declare the 1st of the next month, however. The priests were in charge of this observation. The scientific new moon is the invisible moon, but the Jewish new moon was the faintest crescent. The new moon would have been only visible, of course, at night. (*United States Navel Observatory, Spring Phenomena, 25 to 38 CE.*)

“Each lunar month began with the New Moon Sanctification by recognition of the Sanhedrin. Policy dictated that two witnesses in two different locations, in or near Jerusalem, must testify to sighting the new moon crescent. A vote by the Sanhedrin was then required to officially reckon a new month beginning”

- Christian Era Calendars, by Clark K. Nelson

“At the end of the lunar month, when the moon passes a point between the sun and the earth — the point of conjunction — the moon appears completely dark and is invisible to us. Shortly after that, it reemerges as a thin, crescent-shaped line. That moment is called molad halevanah, “birth of the new moon”, and Rosh Chodesh is the day on which the new moon appears. The calculation of the precise moment of the appearance of the new moon was transmitted to the sages in an unbroken tradition that goes back to Sinai. It was called sod ha’ibur, “principle of intercalation” (Rosh Hashanah 20b). Although the exact time of its reemergence was known, the new moon was sanctified by the Bet Din in Jerusalem on the testimony of two witnesses who had sighted its appearance”

- The Essence of the Holy Days, by Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Finkel

The Jewish new moon would have to have been visible and the declaration would have gone out only after the Sanhedrin confirmed the faint crescent, which happens on average two days after the scientific new moon. Based on these calculations, the 12th, was the 1st of Nisan. If the 12th was the 1st of Nisan, then 13th was the 2nd, the 14th was the 3rd, the 15th was the 4th, the 16th was the 5th, the 17th was the 6th, the 18th was the 7th, the 19th was the 8th, the 20th, was the

9th, the 21st was the 10th, the 22nd was the 11th, the 23rd was the 12th, the 24th was the 13th, and the 25th of the April was the 14th of Nisan, the Passover.

With Wednesday being the Passover, a sabbath would occur on the next day, Thursday. Another sabbath would occur on Saturday, the weekly sabbath. Remember Jesus said he would be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. Let's count the days and nights:

In Genesis, the "evening" and the "morning" were how the days were counted. The evening was the dark hours of the day, and the morning was the light hours.

**Wednesday evening = 1 night
+ Thursday morning = 1 night and 1 day
+ Thursday evening = 2 nights and 1 day
+ Friday morning = 2 nights and 2 days
+ Friday evening = 3 nights and 2 days
+ Saturday morning = 3 nights and 3 days**

It is no wonder the science, history and scripture all agree on this time table. Jesus truly was born, He lived, He died, and He rose again.

Now we will look at the events that transpired while Jesus was on the cross in the order that they occurred.

Luke 23:33 And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

John 19:23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

John 19:24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

Matthew 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

Matthew 27:40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Matthew 27:41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

Matthew 27:42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Matthew 27:43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

Matthew 27:44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

Luke 23:36 And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

Luke 23:37 And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

Luke 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

Luke 23:40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

Luke 23:41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

Luke 23:42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Luke 23:43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

John 19:25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. *(Mary the wife of Cleophas is sister-in-law, Jerome)*

John 19:26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

John 19:27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

Luke 23:44 And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mat 27:47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

John 19:28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

John 19:29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

Matthew 27:48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

Matthew 27:49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

John 19:30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished:

Luke 23:45 And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Mark 15:39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

Luke 23:48 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

Mark 15:41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Reading the scriptures in that order certainly gives a powerful picture of what was happening while Jesus was on the cross. For the burial to resurrection period, we will follow a

similar structure, showing all of the complicated events that took place during this difficult time.

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

John's gospel was written for Greek audience, as we have previously touched on. John often takes time to explain things about Jewish festivals. This is helpful as it confirms for us (once again) the sabbath after the Passover was not the weekly sabbath, but rather it was the sabbath that always occurred the day after Passover.

John 19:32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

John 19:33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

John 19:35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

John 19:36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

John 19:37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

John references the prophecies from Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10. There are many others. Psalm 22 is an excellent resource as a prophecy of the entire crucifixion experience that Jesus went through. Jesus had been dead for a couple of hours when the soldier stabbed Him, as His blood was already separated, platelets from the plasma and the water. Red blood would have settled in the bottom and clear liquid at the top. This means that the feast sabbath was fast approaching, and the bodies would need to be taken off the cross.

John 19:38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

John 19:39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

John 19:40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

John 19:41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

John 19:42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Luke 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

Luke 23:56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Matthew 27:62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

Matthew 27:63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

Matthew 27:64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

Matthew 27:65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

Matthew 27:66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Next, we will talk about the tomb visitations. Many critical scholars will use the Gospel's accounts of the empty tomb as examples of clear contradictions. Remember our first assumption? The Gospel writers do not contradict one another. It is vital to pay attention to what the text says, and not assume information that the text is silent on. For example, in John chapter 20, it appears that Mary Magdelene is the only woman that visits the tomb. Among the four accounts, however, we see that Mary the mother of James, Salome, Joanna, and possibly more women actually visited the tomb. So, is John wrong? Of course not. John doesn't say "only Mary Magdelene came to the tomb," he just says that she did. Which, of course, it witnessed to in all four accounts. Even in the book of John, however, we can see that she is not alone. In verse 2 of chapter 20, John records that Mary says: "we know not where they have laid him." If Mary Magdelene was alone, why would she say "we?" She was not alone, of course, as the other Gospel's testify.

Let's use all four Gospels to piece together the likely order of events. Not all verses are written in chronological order, (especially in Matthew, as we have seen before,) but most are. We will compare the four accounts to get the fullest picture of events.

Saturday, April 28th AD 31 (Julian)

Matthew 28:2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

Matthew 28:3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

Matthew 28:4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

Sunday, April 29th AD 31 (Julian)

Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

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.

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre

Luke 24:1 Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

Mark 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Mark 16:3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

Mark 16:4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

Luke 24:4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Luke 24:5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Luke 24:6 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

Luke 24:7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Luke 24:8 And they remembered his words,

Mark 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Matthew 28:8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Matthew 28:9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Matthew 28:10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Matthew 28:11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

Matthew 28:12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

Matthew 28:13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

Matthew 28:14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

Matthew 28:15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Luke 24:9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

Luke 24:11 And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

John 20:3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

John 20:4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

John 20:5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

John 20:6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

John 20:7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

John 20:8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

John 20:9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

John 20:10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

John 20:11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

John 20:12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

John 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

John 20:14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

John 20:15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

John 20:16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

John 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

John 20:18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

That finishes the early morning tomb discovery. Mary is the central character in all four accounts. When Peter and John run to the tomb, Mary seems to have followed them, and remained behind. The message given to them by the angels doesn't seem to have sunk in, and she continues to believe Jesus had been taken somewhere. Jesus appears to her, however, and she tells the disciples of this encounter.

Jesus after His Resurrection and before His Ascension

Now we will examine Jesus' appearances after the tomb visitations. Jesus appeared several times to his disciples, not just the eleven, but many more as well.

1 Corinthians 15:4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

1 Corinthians 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

1 Corinthians 15:6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15:7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

1 Corinthians 15:8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Paul informs us that over 500 people saw Jesus even before He appeared to His brother and those in Galilee. Truly, this was not "done in a corner."

Let's pick things back up during the daylight hours of the first day of the week.

Mark 16:12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

Luke 24:13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

Luke 24:14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

Luke 24:15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

Luke 24:16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

Luke 24:17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

Luke 24:18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

Luke 24:19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

Luke 24:20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

Luke 24:21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

Luke 24:22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

Luke 24:23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

Luke 24:24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Luke 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Luke 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

We know from this passage it is after the women tell them of all they had seen at the sepulcher, and also after the return of Peter and John. They did not understand the things Jesus had been trying to tell, so Jesus, preventing Himself from being recognized, opens the scriptures up to them. Truly, all the scripture testifies of Jesus. Jesus is the reason for the Bible, He is why the Word exists, because He is the Word who was made flesh.

Luke 24:28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

Luke 24:29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

Luke 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

Luke 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

The disciples shared this amazing moment with Jesus, late afternoon as evening was drawing near, they made haste to return to Jerusalem and the eleven and the rest of the disciples.

Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

Luke 24:33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

Luke 24:34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

Luke 24:35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Mark 16:13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

Interestingly, Jesus' appearance to Peter alone, before appearing to rest of the Apostles, is not recorded in the Gospel narrative. It is only referenced. Here, Cleopas and his fellow mention Jesus appearing to Simon, which we can assume to be Simon Peter, because of this reference by the Apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

Selfishly, it's a shame this event was not recorded, I imagine it would be amazingly powerful. Peter suffered so much during Christ's passion; it must have been a wonderful thing to see. Unless some manuscript surfaces that has yet to be discovered, it would seem that Peter simply kept the moment to Himself.

At this evening meal-time appearance of Jesus, the first appearance to the group as a whole, Mark 16:14 tells us that Jesus admonished the disciples for not believing the eye witness reports. Mark says He does this while sitting down to eat with them, which He does in the Luke account we will read below. He uses the scriptures to show how the disciples should have realized He would rise again.

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Luke 24:37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

Luke 24:38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

Luke 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

John 20:20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

Luke 24:41 And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

Luke 24:42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

Luke 24:43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

Mark 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Mark 16:17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Luke 24:45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

Luke 24:46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

John 20:22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

John 20:23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

John 20:24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

John 20:25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

Thomas is not at this appearance of Jesus, and does not believe. It's easy to criticize Thomas here, but remember, it's hard to say for certain who else fully believed Jesus was risen without having seen Him. Ironically, the chief priests and guards were perhaps the firmest believers of the resurrection without having seen Jesus. They paid the guards to lie about what they had seen, so they certainly took Jesus' resurrection extremely seriously.

John 20:26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

John 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

John 20:29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Monday, May 7th 31 (Julian)

Eight days later, Jesus returns to the disciples and shows Himself to Thomas. Thomas confesses and believes that Jesus is indeed raised from the dead. Jesus makes a statement here to Thomas, but also to all of us. There are going to be times when we won't see, and faith must come before sight.

Let's continue with the narrative. Matthew, as we have demonstrated, is perhaps the most chronologically confusing Gospel. The end of the book makes a few statements:

- 1. The eleven go to Galilee, into a mountain like Jesus commanded.**
- 2. They worshipped Jesus there but some had doubts, it doesn't say what they doubted.**
- 3. Jesus gives the "go into all the world" command, known commonly as the Great Commission.**

It is likely the doubting comment was in reference to the instructions they had been given. What did Jesus mean by preaching the Gospel? Baptizing in His name? Very new concepts that we take for granted today.

Regardless, it is likely around this time the event recorded in John 21 takes place. The disciples present are in Galilee, and Jesus comes to them while they are fishing.

Sometime in May, AD 31 (Julian)

John 21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

John 21:2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

John 21:3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Not all of the disciples are present, and Peter fishes all night to no avail. Jesus once again does not allow Himself to be recognized at first. After telling the disciples to cast the net on the other side, John realized it was Jesus who spoke to them.

John 21:7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

John 21:8 And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

Peter, not content on waiting for the boat to make it ashore, jumped into the water and swam to Jesus. Peter's love for Jesus is evident here, and Jesus would question him on his love shortly after. The conversation between Jesus and Peter here is as well-known as it is profound. Jesus is teaching Peter how to be an Apostle and to take the Gospel to the world, even though he would ultimately give his life for the cause of Christ. Since this is the third meeting with the disciples since the resurrection, then this event took place prior to meeting Jesus in the mountain as is recorded by Matthew.

The Ascension of Jesus

Matthew and Mark approach the ascension in a similar manner, without much detail other than the disciples were gathered when he ascended. John does not record the ascension, as there was already a record of it and John mainly focuses on things the other Gospels do not include.

So, we turn to Luke, not the Gospel, but the writer. The book of Acts, Luke's other New Testament work, fills in the details we don't get in the Gospel accounts. We learn in Acts that Jesus was on earth 40 days after with resurrection. After meeting the disciples in Galilee, Jesus and the disciples return to Jerusalem prior to the ascension.

Thursday, June 7th 31 (Julian)

Luke 24:50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany...

Acts 1:4 And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

Acts 1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 1:7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Luke 24:50 ...and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

Luke 24:51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

Acts 1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

Acts 1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Luke 24:52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

Luke 24:53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Now we have come to end of Jesus Christ's time on earth. I hope this study of the life of Christ has been valuable to you, the reader. Before we wrap up, let's go over some historical facts that back up what the Gospel writers tell us about Jesus. These facts are highlighted by Dr. Gary Habermas in the book, *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*. All of these facts are historically corroborated. If you employ the same historical rigor as you would any other historical event you must reach the following conclusions:

- 1. Jesus died from crucifixion**
- 2. The disciples were convinced they saw the risen Jesus**
- 3. The disciples were transformed**
- 4. Paul was converted to Christianity**
- 5. Jesus' brethren were converted**

These are verifiable historical events that prove how awesomely Jesus changed the lives of his Apostles and all who followed Him. Who would die for a myth?

2 Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

Thank you for embarking on this historical and Biblical survey of the life of Christ. Please visit pcofz.com and look at the literature page for more studies of the Word of God.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Ethan Jones

Evangelist / Pentecostal Church of Zion

Addendum

Records request from US Naval Observatory

VERNAL EQUINOX

Julian			Day of Week	Julian		
Calendar	Date	Greenwich		Calendar	Date	Greenwich
BCE	March	Time	CE	March	Time	Day of Week
25	22	8 p.m.	7	23	8 a.m.	Wednesday
24	23	2 a.m.	8	22	2 p.m.	Thursday
23	23	8 a.m.	9	22	8 p.m.	Friday
22	23	1 p.m.	10	23	1 a.m.	Sunday
21	22	7 p.m.	11	23	7 a.m.	Monday
20	23	1 a.m.	12	22	1 p.m.	Tuesday
19	23	7 a.m.	13	22	7 p.m.	Wednesday
18	23	1 p.m.	14	23	1 a.m.	Friday
17	22	6 p.m.	15	23	7 a.m.	Saturday
16	23	0*	16	22	Noon	Sunday
15	23	6 a.m.	17	22	6 p.m.	Monday
14	23	Noon	18	23	0*	Wednesday
13	22	6 p.m.	19	23	6 a.m.	Thursday
12	22	11 p.m.	20	22	Noon	Friday
11	23	5 a.m.	21	22	6 p.m.	Saturday
10	23	11 a.m.	22	22	11 p.m.	Sunday
9	22	5 p.m.	23	23	5 a.m.	Tuesday
8	22	11 p.m.	24	22	11 a.m.	Wednesday
7	23	5 a.m.	25	22	5 p.m.	Thursday
6	23	10 a.m.	26	22	10 p.m.	Friday
5	22	4 p.m.	27	23	4 a.m.	Sunday
4	22	10 p.m.	28	22	10 a.m.	Monday
3	23	4 a.m.	29	22	4 p.m.	Tuesday
2	23	10 a.m.	30	22	10 p.m.	Wednesday
1	22	3 p.m.	31	23	3 a.m.	Friday
CE			32	22	9 a.m.	Saturday
1	22	9 p.m.	33	22	3 p.m.	Sunday
2	23	3 a.m.	34	22	9 p.m.	Monday
3	23	9 a.m.	35	23	3 a.m.	Wednesday
4	22	3 p.m.	36	22	9 a.m.	Thursday
5	22	8 p.m.	37	22	2 p.m.	Friday
6	23	2 a.m.	38	22	8 p.m.	Saturday

* Midnight at the beginning of March 23.

FULL MOON

NEW MOON

On or next after date of equinox			On or preceding date of equinox		Following equinox	
Julian Cal. Date	Greenwich Time	Week Day	Julian Cal. Date	Greenwich Time	Julian Cal. Date	Greenwich Time
BCE						
25 April 3	4 a.m.	Thu.	March 19	Noon	April 18 4	4 a.m.
24 March 23	9 p.m.	Mon.	March 8	2 p.m.	April 7 5	4 a.m.
23 April 11	9 p.m.	Sun.	Feb. 25	8 p.m.	March 27 9	4 a.m.
22 April 1	6 a.m.	Fri.	March 16	7 p.m.	April 15 6	4 a.m.
21 April 19	1 a.m.	Thu.	March 5	11 a.m.	April 3 7	4 p.m.
20 April 8	3 a.m.	Mon.	Feb. 23	4 a.m.	March 24 1	4 p.m.
19 March 28	5 a.m.	Fri.	March 14	4 a.m.	April 12 1	4 p.m.
18 April 16	0*	Thu.	March 3	Noon	April 2 2	4 a.m.
17 April 4	Noon	Mon.	March 21	8 a.m.	April 19 9	4 p.m.
16 March 25	4 a.m.	Sat.	March 10	8 a.m.	April 9 0*	
15 April 13	5 a.m.	Fri.	Feb. 27	10 a.m.	March 29 1	4 a.m.
14 April 2	7 p.m.	Tue.	March 18	6 a.m.	April 16 7	4 p.m.
13 April 20	5 p.m.	Mon.	March 6	6 p.m.	April 5 4	4 a.m.
12 April 9	9 p.m.	Fri.	Feb. 24	11 a.m.	March 25 7	4 p.m.
11 March 29	10 p.m.	Tue.	March 15	Noon	April 13 8	4 p.m.
10 April 17	4 p.m.	Mon.	March 5	2 a.m.	April 3	Noon
9 April 5	10 p.m.	Fri.	March 22	11 p.m.	April 21 11	4 a.m.
8 March 26	11 a.m.	Wed.	March 12	3 a.m.	April 10 6	4 p.m.
7 April 14	Noon	Tue.	March 1	3 a.m.	March 30 7	4 p.m.
6 April 4	5 a.m.	Sun.	March 19	9 p.m.	April 18	Noon
5 March 23	6 p.m.	Thu.	March 8	5 a.m.	April 6 5	4 p.m.
4 April 11	3 p.m.	Wed.	Feb. 25	6 p.m.	March 27 4	4 a.m.
3 March 31	6 p.m.	Sun.	March 16	7 p.m.	April 15 4	4 a.m.
2 April 19	10 a.m.	Sat.	March 6	Noon	April 4 9	4 p.m.
1 April 7	Noon	Wed.	Feb. 24	0*	March 24	Noon
CE						
1 March 27	9 p.m.	Sun.	March 13	8 p.m.	April 12 9	4 a.m.
2 April 15	7 p.m.	Sat.	March 2	10 p.m.	April 1 2	4 p.m.
3 April 5	Noon	Thu.	March 21	3 p.m.	April 20 7	4 a.m.
4 March 25	5 a.m.	Tue.	March 9	6 p.m.	April 8 9	4 a.m.
5 April 13	3 a.m.	Mon.	Feb. 27	3 a.m.	March 28 2	4 p.m.
6 April 2	11 a.m.	Fri.	March 18	3 a.m.	April 16	Noon
7 April 21	5 a.m.	Thu. (1)	March 7	8 p.m.	April 6 4	4 a.m.
8 April 9	6 a.m.	Mon.	Feb. 25	Noon	March 25 9	4 p.m.
9 March 29	9 a.m.	Fri.	March 15	10 a.m.	April 13 9	4 p.m.
10 April 17	6 a.m.	Thu.	March 4	4 p.m.	April 3 6	4 a.m.
11 April 6	7 p.m.	Mon.	March 23	10 a.m.	April 22 1	4 a.m.
12 March 26	Noon	Sat.	March 11	11 a.m.	April 10 3	4 a.m.
13 April 14	Noon	Fri.	Feb. 28	3 p.m.	March 30 5	4 a.m.
14 April 4	2 a.m.	Wed.	March 19	Noon	April 18 0*	
15 March 24	7 a.m.	Sun.	March 9	2 a.m.	April 7 11	4 a.m.
16 April 11	0*	Sat.	Feb. 26	8 p.m.	March 27 4	4 a.m.
17 March 31	1 a.m.	Wed.	March 16	8 p.m.	April 15 4	4 a.m.
18 April 18	7 p.m.	Mon.	March 6	7 a.m.	April 4 7	4 p.m.
19 April 8	4 a.m.	Sat.	Feb. 23	Noon	March 25 3	4 a.m.
20 March 27	7 p.m.	Wed.	March 13	5 a.m.	April 11 9	4 p.m.

21 April 15	8 p.m.	Tue.	March 2	6 a.m.	March 31 10 p.m.
22 April 5	Noon	Sun.	March 21	1 a.m.	April 19 3 p.m.
23 March 25	11 p.m.	Thu.	March 10	11 a.m.	April 8 10 p.m.
24 April 12	6 p.m.	Wed.	Feb. 28	2 a.m.	March 28 11 a.m.
25 April 1	7 p.m.	Sun.	March 18	4 a.m.	April 16 Noon
26 April 20	Noon	Sat. (2)	March 7	7 p.m.	April 6 5 a.m.
27 April 9	4 p.m.	Wed.	Feb. 25	4 a.m.	March 26 5 p.m.
28 March 29	3 a.m.	Mon.	March 15	0*	April 13 2 p.m.
29 April 17	3 a.m.	Sun.	March 4	0*	April 2 5 p.m.
30 April 6	8 p.m.	Thu.	March 22	6 p.m.	April 21 9 a.m.
31 March 27	11 a.m.	Tue.	March 11	11 p.m.	April 10 Noon
32 April 14	9 a.m.	Mon.	Feb. 29	10 a.m.	March 29 8 p.m.
33 April 3	3 p.m.	Fri.	March 19	10 a.m.	April 17 7 p.m.
34 March 23	3 p.m.	Tue.	March 9	4 a.m.	April 7 Noon
35 April 11	8 a.m.	Mon.	Feb. 26	6 p.m.	March 28 4 a.m.
36 March 30	2 p.m.	Fri.	March 16	3 p.m.	April 15 3 a.m.
37 April 18	Noon	Thu.	March 5	7 p.m.	April 4 10 a.m.
38 April 8	3 a.m.	Tue.	Feb. 22	7 p.m.	March 24 Noon

(1) Preceding Full Moon, March 22, 1 p.m.

(2) Preceding Full Moon, March 21, 9 p.m.

* Midnight at the beginning of the given date.