

When Was Jesus Born, Baptized, and Buried?

A Review of LDS and Non-LDS
Educated Guesses

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Preface

On my mission, I read *Jesus the Christ* by Elder James E. Talmage (1915). He said Jesus was born on April 6th 1 BC, baptized just before he turned 30 years old, and died after living 33 years and a few days.

Since my mission, I have noticed that not all LDS leaders and scholars agree with Elder Talmage's dates. Some LDS scholars say Jesus was born on April 6th 1 BC while others say he was born in 5/4 BC. Elder Hyrum Smith (1923) said "There are reasons for believing that ... the Nativity occurred four years before our era [4 BC]." Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1979) said, "We do not believe it is possible with the present state of our knowledge ... to state with finality" the year Jesus was born.

Non-LDS scholars also differ on the year of the Nativity. Most say Jesus was born in 5/4 BC while others say he was born in 3/2 BC. In books for the general public, most scholars present their conclusions as fact with little or no discussion of the evidence and arguments. Even when some evidence and reasoning is presented, it is usually to support their conclusions. Opposing viewpoints are often ignored, misrepresented, or belittled. In academic articles, scholars seek to refute the arguments of others and defend their own. Examples of written 'debates' can be found in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos* (I and II). Other examples in the bibliography include Martin and Mosley vs. Johnson, Filmer vs. Barnes and Bernegger, Lefgren and Pratt vs. Brown, Griggs, and Hansen.

I like these differences in opinion because *when everybody thinks alike, nobody thinks very much*. Opposing viewpoints draw attention to evidence and possible interpretations. I found a few books that reviewed the evidence and arguments for the conclusions of non-LDS scholars. However, I could not find a similar book that referenced LDS scholars. This past year I have been reviewing the evidence and arguments of LDS scholars who give dates for the birth, baptism, and burial of Jesus. As a

result, I have also reviewed the writings of non-LDS scholars. I found this to be an interesting study and have decided to write this book to remember and share what I have learned.

In this book, I have attempted to provide an accurate summary of the evidence and arguments for the differing conclusions of both LDS and non-LDS scholars.

A conclusion is where I got tired of thinking.

Sources

Endnotes are provided for those who are interested in reading more. The bibliography lists sources referenced in the endnotes.

In the text you will see references to scriptures. Bible references, unless otherwise noted, are from the *King James Version*. There are a few references to the *New International Version* (NIV) and the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV).

You will also see references like the following:

Citation	Meaning
(¶508)	Paragraph 508 in <i>Handbook of Biblical Chronology</i> (by Jack Finegan, 1998 revised edition).
(JD 15:253)	<i>Journal of Discourses</i> , vol. 15, page 253
(Dio 48.28)	Dio , Cassius (c. AD 156–229), <i>The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus</i> , translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert,
(<i>Ant</i> 14.389 [14.14.5])	Josephus (c. AD 37–100), <i>The Judaean Antiquities</i> , book 14, sect. 8 or [book 14, chap. 14, sect. 5]
(<i>War</i> 1.665 [1.33.8])	Josephus (c. AD 37–100), <i>The Judaean War</i> , book 14, sect. 8 or [book 14, chap. 14, sect. 5]

References to the works of Josephus will be given using both the Niese and [Whiston] systems (e.g., *Ant* 14.389 [14.14.5]). An online version of Josephus in English and Greek is available at pace.cns.yorku.ca. An English translation of Dio Cassius is available at www.gutenberg.org.

Introduction

To create a personal ancestral file, we are asked to record the name, birth date, baptism date, marriage date, and death date for each of our ancestors. We are also asked to identify our sources for the dates we record. These sources help other genealogists verify dates and resolve differences. Ideally, these sources would be birth, baptism, marriage, and death certificates or records based on eyewitness accounts recorded at or near the time of the event.

Unfortunately, no birth, baptism, or death certificates exist for Jesus. “Attempts to determine the exact date of Christ’s birth or death are complicated by a dearth of pertinent historical information and multiple dating systems.”¹ Also, the available evidence is often ambiguous or inconsistent.

In situations like this, scholars and genealogists classify their evidence as:²

1. Primary or Secondary evidence:
 - a. Primary: evidence or records created at or near the time of past events and based on firsthand knowledge (e.g., eyewitness).
 - b. Secondary: interpretation or reconstruction of events written long after past events or not based on firsthand knowledge.
2. Direct or Indirect evidence:
 - a. Direct: sufficient without introducing other records.
 - b. Indirect or circumstantial: requires other information or records to draw a conclusion.
3. Original or Derivative evidence:
 - a. Original: not derived from other records or sources.
 - b. Derivative: copied or summarized from other sources.

Without “*primary*” evidence, scholars rely on “*secondary*” evidence. The books of the New Testament were written about 50 or more years after the birth of Jesus by men who focused on recording important events without giving specific dates.

Without “*direct*” evidence (e.g., record of date of Jesus’ birth),

scholars must rely on “*indirect*” evidence (e.g., Jesus was born in the days of Herod, baptized in the 15th year of Tiberius, and buried during a Passover week). This New Testament evidence requires other records to determine the corresponding dates. Without “*original*” evidence, scholars rely on “*derivative*” evidence. We do not have copies of the original writings of the New Testament or Josephus. When handwritten copies were made, transmission errors were likely. Even printed copies could have typesetting errors.

Scholars interpret the indirect, secondary, and derivative evidence differently. When evidence is inconsistent or ambiguous, scholars evaluate and select pieces of evidence that they feel come from the same historical puzzle. They put the pieces together where possible, reinterpret or change pieces to make them fit, resolve or exclude opposing evidence, and use their imaginations to fill in the missing pieces. Since scholars evaluate and interpret the evidence differently, they tell different stories about events related to the birth, baptism, and burial of Jesus. These stories are educated guesses based on historical evidence. We can write “history” as “his-story” to emphasize that history is often based on educated guesses and not on direct, primary, original evidence. Scholars often challenge or refute each other’s stories while defending and revising their own.

When scholars share their stories with non-scholars, they often express their opinions as if they were fact. They do not tell us which parts of their stories have been challenged. When they write articles in academic journals, they defend their stories and attack the stories of other scholars. The stories taught in the majority of academic programs are often treated as the “academically correct” view. Some scholars may even attempt to silence dissent from the minority. They call their beliefs certain, firmly established or proven beyond a reasonable doubt, and question the intelligence, scholarship, or understanding of minority scholars.

Part I: REVIEW OF CHRONOLOGIES

Since the 1896 publication of Schürer’s *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, most scholars agree that King Herod died in 4 BC and that Jesus was born between 7 BC and 5/4 BC. Before Schürer, scholars had placed the birth of Jesus in every year from 7 BC to 1 BC.³ Since about 1960, some scholars have been challenging the Schürer consensus.

1: Chronologies of Non-LDS Scholars

Scholars base their conclusions on different interpretations of some key events in the New Testament and in Roman history.

1. The four gospels agree that Jesus was born before king Herod died.
2. Josephus, an ancient Jewish/Roman historian, said that Herod died after a lunar eclipse and before a Passover (Mar/Apr). Between 8 BC and 1 BC, the only six lunar eclipses visible in Jerusalem occurred on the dates shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Lunar Eclipses (8 BC to 1 BC)

8 BC	5 BC	4 BC	1 BC
18 Nov.	23 Mar. and 15 Sept.	13 Mar.	10 Jan. and 29 Dec.

3. John the Baptist began baptizing in the 15th year of Tiberius (Lk 3:1) which was either AD 26/27 or 28/29.
4. Sometime later, John baptized Jesus who “began to be *about* thirty years of age” (Lk 3:23). Scholars believe this means that Jesus was almost 30, 29–31, or 26–34.
5. Jesus died during the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Passover week after his baptism.⁴
6. Most scholars agree that Jesus died on a Friday afternoon (14 Nisan) a few hours before the Passover meal that Sabbath evening. Between AD 27 and 34, this occurred in 30, 33, and possibly in 27 or 29.

Finegan’s *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (HBC) summarizes the evidence, interpretations, and arguments of

scholars for the different options listed above. In his 1964 edition (HBC₆₄), Finegan accepted three chronologies that assumed Herod died in 4 BC. In 1966, Filmer wrote an article that argued against 4 BC and for 1 BC.⁵ In 1968, Barnes⁶ wrote what Brown called a “convincing refutation.”⁷ These articles started a debate among scholars in which each refutation was met with a rebuttal. Each refutation and rebuttal was “convincing” to the convinced. After referring to articles in this debate, Raymond Brown (1993) said that “recent discussions offer no compelling reason to change.”⁸ However, Finegan in his 1998 revised edition (HBC₉₈) summarized this debate in more detail and accepted two chronologies that assume Herod died in 1 BC. Non-LDS scholars generally accept one of the five chronologies in Table 2 from HBC₆₄ and HBC₉₈. Jesus was crucified at his fourth Passover after baptism in three chronologies and at his first or second Passover in the other two. Later chapters summarize evidence, interpretations, and reasoning for and against these chronologies.

Table 2: Non-LDS Chronologies

Event	HBC ₆₄			HBC ₉₈	
	5 BC-AD 30	5 BC-AD 33	5 BC-AD 30	2 BC-AD 33	2 BC-AD 30
Jesus born	Dec 5 BC	Dec 5 BC	Dec 5 BC	Jan 2 BC	Jan 2 BC
Herod died	4 BC	4 BC	4 BC	1 BC	1 BC
John began baptizing	AD 26 (age 30)	AD 29 (age 33)	AD 28 (age 32)	AD 29 (age 31)	AD 29 (age 31)
Jesus was baptized*	AD 26 (age < 30)	AD 29 (age < 33)	AD 28 (age < 32)	AD 29 (age < 31)	AD 29 (age < 31)
1 st Passover**	AD 27 31 st P ^{30.3}	AD 30 34 th P ^{33.3}	AD 29 33 rd P ^{32.3}	AD 30 32 nd P ^{31.3}	AD 30 32 nd P ^{31.3}
2 nd Passover	AD 28 32 nd P ^{31.3}	AD 31 35 th P ^{34.3}	AD 30 34 th P ^{33.3}	AD 31 33 rd P ^{32.3}	
3 rd Passover	AD 29 33 rd P ^{32.3}	AD 32 36 th P ^{35.3}		AD 32 34 th P ^{33.3}	
4 th Passover	AD 30 34 th P ^{33.3}	AD 33 37 th P ^{36.3}		AD 33 35 th P ^{34.3}	

* Age assumes Jesus was baptized a month or so before his birthday. John was about 6 months older.

** 31stP^{30.3} means the 31st Passover when Jesus was 30.3 years old.
1stP^{0.3} is the 1st Passover after Jesus was born (age 0.3).

2: LDS Scriptures and Authorities

Additional clues are found in the LDS scriptures, and in the writings of LDS prophets, and apostles.

LDS Scriptures

3 Nephi. “The Nephites began to reckon their time from this period when the sign was given, or from the coming of Christ” (3 Ne 2:8). The sign of the crucifixion was observed “in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month” (3 Ne 8:5).⁹

These verses have been interpreted in two ways. First, Jesus was crucified during Passover almost exactly 33 “Nephite years” after he was born during the Passover season.¹⁰ April 6th is normally within two weeks of Passover each year. Second, “Jesus probably died on or around his *thirty-fourth* birthday.”¹¹ This interpretation supports an April 5 BC (birth) and April AD 30 (death) chronology. However, some scholars say that “using Book of Mormon chronology to measure the length of Jesus’ life, especially in terms of Old World calendar systems, must fail simply because we do not know what calendrical arrangements were employed by the Nephites.”¹²

In a later chapter, we will discuss possible interpretations and implications of these verses for LDS chronologies. We will also discuss calendar systems that may have been used by the Nephites and how they relate to Jewish calendars.

D&C 20:1. On April 6, 1830, the Church was organized 1,830 “years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh” (D&C 20:1).

LDS Prophets and Apostles

The statements of LDS prophets and apostles in Table 3 generally agree that Jesus was born on April 6th. However, some LDS scholars believe Christ was born in 1 BC, exactly 1,830 years before 6 April 1830, while others believe the phrase 1830 “years since the coming of our Lord” simply expressed the current year as being 1830.

Table 3: Statements by LDS Prophets and Apostles

Year	LDS Prophets and Apostles
1830	The Prophet Joseph Smith's explanation of D&C 20: "In this manner did the Lord continue to give us instructions from time to time, concerning the duties which now devolved upon us; and ... we obtained of Him the following, by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information, but also pointed out to us the precise day upon which, according to His will and commandment, we should proceed to organize His Church once more here upon the earth." ¹³
1833	The Prophet Joseph Smith: (April 6 th) "The day was spent ... in giving and receiving knowledge ... it being just 1800 years since the Savior laid down His life that men might have everlasting life." ¹⁴
1872a	Elder Wilford Woodruff: (April 6 th) "According to the best knowledge we have, 1842 years ago to-day [AD 30], the Lord Jesus was crucified on Mount Calvary for the sins of the world." (<i>JD</i> 15:7)
1872b	Elder Orson Pratt: "It is also acknowledged by the greater portion of the learned men of the day, who have carefully examined the subject, that Jesus was crucified on the 6 th day of April [AD 30]; and according to the true Christian era it was precisely eighteen hundred years from the day of his crucifixion until the day that this Church was organized." (<i>JD</i> 15:45 [4/07/1872])
1872c	Elder Orson Pratt: "I have seen several accounts—some of them published in our periodicals—of learned men in different nations, in which it is stated that, according to the best of their judgment from the researches they have made, Christ was crucified on the 6 th of April. ... [Joseph] had a revelation to organize the Church precisely 1800 years from that great event." (<i>JD</i> 15:256, 260 [12/29/1872])
1872d	Elder Orson Pratt referring to D&C 20:1 "We are not on this account to take this as the real date, but it is adapted to our present mode of reckoning." (<i>JD</i> 15:262 [12/29/1872])
1915	Elder James E. Talmage: "We believe that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, April 6, 1 BC." ¹⁵
1923a	Elder Hyrum M. Smith: "In all probability the 6 th of April is the anniversary of the birthday of our Lord." ¹⁶
1923b	Elder Hyrum M. Smith: "There are reasons for believing that ... the Nativity occurred four years before our era [5/4 BC]. ... All that [D&C 20:1] means to say is that the Church was organized in the year that is commonly accepted as AD 1830." ¹⁷ Note: This quote was omitted from the revised edition prepared by Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, and Marion G. Romney.

1954	President J. Reuben Clark: “Some may sharply disagree” with scholars who say that Jesus was born “at the end of 5 BC, or the beginning or early part of 4 BC. The Church has made no official declaration of the matter, beyond” D&C 20:1. “In the early editions of the <i>Doctrine and Covenants Commentary</i> ... this verse was interpreted as follows: ... [see quote 1923b above]. This statement has been omitted in the latest edition of the <i>Commentary</i> . <i>I am not proposing any date as the true date</i> . But ... I have taken the date of the Savior’s birth ... [as] late 5 BC, or early 4 BC, because Bible commentaries and the writings of scholars are frequently keyed upon that chronology and because I believe that so to do will <i>facilitate ... the work of those studying the life and works of the Savior from sources using this accepted chronology.</i> ” ¹⁸
1958	Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “Apparently Christ was born on the day corresponding to April 6 (D&C 20:1) ...” ¹⁹
1965	Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “It appears that the latter-day kingdom formally came into being on the [1830 th] anniversary of our Lord’s birth. In other words, Christ was born on April 6, 1 BC. (D&C 20:1)” ²⁰
1971	President N. Eldon Tanner: “Members of the Church also believe that Christ was born on April 6 in the year 1 BC. (See D&C 20:1.)” ²¹
1973	President Harold B. Lee: “April 6, 1973, ... commemorates not only the anniversary of the organization of The Church ..., but also the anniversary of the birth of ... Jesus Christ.” ²²
1975	President Spencer W. Kimball: “Christ was born on the sixth of April.” ²³
1979	Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “We do not believe it is possible with the present state of our knowledge ... to state with finality” the year Jesus was born. He then included the 1915 (Talmage), 1923b (Smith), and 1954 (Clark) quotes. Then he said that “in this present work” (i.e., <i>The Mortal Messiah</i>) he would follow the same course as President Clark. “Christ could have been born on April 6 of 5 BC. We repeat ... that this is not a settled issue.” ²⁴
1980	President Spencer W. Kimball: “Today [April 6, 1980] we not only celebrate ... the organization of the Church, but also ... the birth of Christ on this day 1,980 years ago.” ²⁵
1986	Elder Neal A. Maxwell: “April 6 is the date of Jesus’ birth. It is also the date of birth of his latter-day Church. (See D&C 20:1.)” ²⁶
1997	Elder Richard G. Scott: “It is April 6 th . Modern scripture records that Jesus Christ was born on this day.” ²⁷
1997	President Gordon B. Hinckley: “It is the season of the winter solstice. ... While we now know through revelation the time of the Savior’s birth [April 6], we observe the 25 th of December with the rest of the Christian world.” ²⁸

Scholars who believe Herod died in 4 BC have offered explanations to support a non-literal interpretation of D&C 20:1. Frequently, they quote Elder McConkie's 1979 quote in Table 3 above.

"Is it not just as likely that the phrase 'one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh' constitutes a passing acknowledgment by the Lord of the date on which, according to our current calendrical system, the Church was being organized? Why should it mean more than that?"²⁹

"The persons whose expressions were recorded in Section 20:1–4 were the two young men ... to whom the inspired thoughts were given. ... Clearly, Section 20:1–36 is divinely inspired testimony and praise expressed from a human point of view. It is not a revelation spoken from the Lord's perspective: 'Thus saith the Lord.' ... Once the human perspective of Section 20 is recognized, the young writers' use of *their own calendar* according to their customs is understandable. In light of the importance of Section 20 as a document to govern the Church, one would expect that they would choose a lofty phrase like 'since the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the flesh' instead of the more common 'in the year of our Lord.'"³⁰

"The writing of [D&C] 20 was begun as early as 1829 and was authored by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Therefore, the language of section 20 is based on the inspiration of the Prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, but the wording was not dictated directly by the Lord, as evidenced by an earlier draft of the section that was written in 1829. The wording of [D&C] 20:1 likely reflects standard dating conventions of the day rather than the Lord's revealed endorsement of His birth date."³¹

3: Chronologies of LDS Scholars

Many LDS scholars use an HBC⁶⁴ chronology that assumes Jesus died during the 4th Passover after he was baptized. President J. Reuben Clark used the 5 BC – AD 30 chronology to "facilitate ... the work of those studying the life and works of the Savior from sources using this accepted chronology." By so doing he was "not proposing any date as the true date."³² Some LDS writers (e.g., Elder Bruce R. McConkie) use "accepted" chronologies for the same reason, while others accept the evidence, interpretation, and reasoning that supports these chronologies.

Some LDS writers like President Clark use the 5 BC – AD 30 chronology above with slight modifications. For example, Jesus was baptized in 27 AD instead of late 26 AD³³; or Jesus was born on 6 April 5 BC³⁴ or perhaps spring 5 BC³⁵. Other LDS writers use the 5 BC – AD 33 chronology with slight modifications (e.g., Jesus born in 7–5 BC).³⁶ I have not found any LDS chronology that is based on the 2 BC – AD 33 chronology in Table 2.

Many LDS scholars believe Jesus was born on April 6th. Elder Talmage used a 6 April 1 BC – AD 33 chronology³⁷ that would require the death of Herod to be in AD 1. Elder Orson Pratt used a 6 April 4 BC – AD 30 chronology³⁸ that would require the death of Herod to be in 1 BC or AD 1. Other scholars use a 6 April 5 BC – AD 30 chronology (see Table 5) that would require the death of Herod to be in 5/4 BC. Table 4 shows how the chronologies in Table 2 change if we assume that Jesus was born in April (nine months earlier). It also includes two columns that show the chronologies of Elder Orson Pratt and Elder James E. Talmage.

Table 4: April 6th Chronologies

Event	HBC ⁶⁴		HBC ⁹⁸	O. Pratt	Talmage
	5 BC–AD 30	5 BC–AD 33	2 BC–AD 33	4 BC–AD 30	1 BC–AD 33
Jesus born	5 BC Apr 6 th	5 BC Apr 6 th	2 BC Apr 6 th	4 BC Apr 6 th	1 BC Apr 6 th
Herod died	4 BC	4 BC	1 BC	1 BC/AD 1	AD 1
John began baptizing	AD 26 (age 31)	AD 29 (age 34)	AD 29 (age 32)	AD 26 (age 30)	AD 29 (age 30)
Jesus was baptized	AD 26 (age < 31)	AD 29 (age < 34)	AD 29 (age < 32)	AD 26 (age < 30)	AD 29 (age < 30)
1 st Passover	AD 27 32 nd P ^{31.0}	AD 30 35 th P ^{34.0}	AD 30 33 rd P ^{32.0}	AD 27 31 st P ^{30.0}	AD 30 31 st P ^{30.0}
2 nd Passover	AD 28 33 rd P ^{32.0}	AD 31 36 th P ^{35.0}	AD 31 34 th P ^{33.0}	AD 28 32 nd P ^{31.0}	AD 31 32 nd P ^{31.0}
3 rd Passover	AD 29 34 th P ^{33.0}	AD 32 37 th P ^{36.0}	AD 32 35 th P ^{34.0}	AD 29 33 rd P ^{32.0}	AD 32 33 rd P ^{32.0}
4 th Passover Jesus died	AD 30 35 th P ^{34.0}	AD 33 38 th P ^{37.0}	AD 33 36 th P ^{35.0}	AD 30 34 th P ^{33.0}	AD 33 34 th P ^{33.0}

* Age assumes Jesus was baptized a month or so before his birthday.

** 31stP^{30.0} means the 31st Passover when Jesus was 30.0 years old.

1stP^{0.0} is the 1st Passover season when Jesus was born (age 0).

Table 5 gives a summary of the chronologies used in various books and articles written by LDS authors. I checked current New Testament books in the BYU Bookstore and books in the reference section of the BYU Library. The table does not include books that discussed New Testament events without giving any dates. Some authors give a range of years for some events, while others don't give a year.

Table 5: New Testament Dates in Writings of LDS Authors

Author	Year	Birth*	Baptism	#Po	Death
LDS BD ³⁹	1981			4	
Book of Mormon ⁴⁰	1981	AD 1			AD 34
Talmage ⁴¹	1915	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>	AD 30	4	Fri AD 33
McConkie ⁴²	1965	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>		4	Fri
Sperry ⁴³	1968	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>			Fri AD 33 Apr 1 st
Rel 211-212 ⁴⁴	1979	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>	AD 30	4	Fri AD 33 Apr 1 st
Lefgren ⁴⁵	1980	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>			Fri AD 33 Apr 1 st
John Pratt ⁴⁶	1985ab	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>	AD 28/29?	4	Fri AD 33 Apr 1 st
John Pratt ⁴⁷	1994	<i>1 BC Apr 6th</i>	AD 29/30?	4	Fri AD 33 Apr 1 st
Orson Pratt ⁴⁸	1872	4 BC Apr 11 th			Fri AD 30 Apr 6 th
Huber* ⁴⁹	1982	4 BC Apr 11 th or 5 BC Sept/Oct	AD 26/27	4	Fri AD 30
Clark ⁵⁰	1954	5 BC Dec	AD 27 Jan	4	Fri AD 30
McConkie ⁵¹	1979	5/4 BC Dec–Apr 5 BC Apr 6 th ?	AD 27 Jan	4	Fri AD 30
Spackman ⁵²	1993	<i>5 BC Mar 21st</i>	AD 26–30	2–4	Fri AD 29 Mar 16
Wayment ... ⁵³	2005	5 BC Apr–Dec	AD 27	4	Fri AD 30
Holzapel ... ⁵⁴	2005	5 BC Apr (6?)	AD 27	4	Fri AD 30
Holzapel ... ⁵⁵	2006	5 BC Apr–Dec			Fri AD 30
Welch, Hall ⁵⁶	2002	7–5 BC	AD 29–30	4	AD 33
Ogden ... ⁵⁷	2006	6–4, 1 BC Apr 5 th		4	Fri AD 33?
Ridges ⁵⁸	2007		AD 29		Fri
Hall ⁵⁹	1992	Apr 6 th	AD 28/29		

* Gregorian dates. Passover birthdates are in *italics*. #Po = number of Passovers. Shaded cells indicate no year was given or implied.

Scholars agree that Jesus was born before Herod died, but they disagree about when Herod died.

Part II: WHEN DID HEROD DIE?

The gospels agree that Jesus was born before king Herod died. Jesus was born “in the days of Herod the king” (Mt 2:1; Lk 1:5). After the wise men visited Herod, they went to Bethlehem where they found “the young child.” [The Greek word can mean “infant” or “older child.” (§508)] When Herod ordered two-year old males in Bethlehem killed (probably 12–15 boys⁶⁰), Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt until Herod died (Mt 2:13-16).

When did Herod die? We have no direct, primary evidence indicating the year Herod died. There is no death certificate or record showing Herod’s death date. This may change because on 8 May 2007 Hebrew University sent out a news release saying that the tomb of King Herod was discovered at Herodium. However, “no inscriptions have been found yet at Herodium, neither on the sarcophagus nor in the building remains.”⁶¹ Some scholars say more research is needed because full verification would require an inscription. Without direct, primary evidence, scholars rely on their interpretations of indirect, secondary evidence that will be described in the next several chapters.

Most scholars believe Herod died in 5/4 BC and that Jesus was born between two months and two years earlier.⁶² However, some scholars believe Herod died in 1 BC, while some LDS scholars believe he died in AD 1. Much of the non-biblical evidence comes from two ancient historians: (a) Josephus⁶³ (AD 37–100), a Jewish historian and Roman citizen, who wrote *The Judean War* (*War*, c. 75) and *The Judean Antiquities* (*Ant*, c. 94), and (b) Dio Cassius (c. AD 156–229), a Roman historian, who wrote *The Roman History: The Reign of Augustus*.

“Recent decades have witnessed a stunning series of confirmations that Josephus is ... a reliable historian.”⁶⁴ However, he was only as good as his sources and his interpretation of the evidence. His stories cannot always be corroborated with other evidence. Some modern scholars

believe he based some statements on legends and made some mistakes that will be mentioned in later chapters. Some scholars believe that at times a scholar's interpretation of Josephus is incorrect, not Josephus.

4: Lunar Eclipse Followed by Passover

Josephus said that Herod died shortly after a lunar eclipse and shortly before a Passover (14 Nisan). Table 6 shows information about lunar eclipses that were visible in Jerusalem between 8 BC and AD 1.

Table 6: Lunar Eclipses and Passovers (8 BC – AD 1)⁶⁵

Eclipse*	Days	Passover	Eclipse Info	Sunset ⁶⁶
18 Nov. 8 BC	149	16 Apr. 7 BC	Partial 4:10 am– 6:40 am	4:39 pm
23 Mar. 5 BC	29	22 Apr. 5 BC	Total 6:50 pm–10:40 pm	5:52 pm
15 Sept. 5 BC	208	11 Apr. 4 BC	Total 8:40 pm–12:20 am	6:46 pm
13 Mar. 4 BC	29	11 Apr. 4 BC	Partial 11:50 pm– 4:10 am	5:45 pm
10 Jan. 1 BC	90	9 Apr. 1 BC	Total 10:40 pm– 3:15 am	4:53 pm
29 Dec. 1 BC	91	30 Mar. AD 1	Partial 3:35 pm– 6:08 pm	4:44 pm

* Julian dates are used. (Gregorian dates are 2 days earlier.) “Days” indicate the number of days between the eclipse and the following Passover. “Eclipse Info” indicates about when each eclipse was visible in Jericho where Herod was at the time and if it was a total or partial eclipse. If an eclipse starts before sunset, it is not visible until about 20 minutes after sunset.

Josephus mentions only one lunar eclipse in all of his writings. He does not say if it was a partial or a total eclipse. Most lunar eclipses go unnoticed because people are inside or asleep during the few hours when the eclipse is visible.⁶⁷ Based on other evidence, scholars reject the 8 BC and Mar. 5 BC eclipses. The eclipses in Mar. 4 BC and Jan. 1 BC began about six hours after sunset when most people would have been asleep. The Sept. 5 BC eclipse began about two hours after sunset. The Dec. 1 BC lunar eclipse would have “been visible during the early evening [for about an hour] when people would have been likely to notice it.”⁶⁸ When the moon is low in the sky like this one was, the shaded part is often a blood red color.⁶⁹

Only the three Passover years associated with the last four eclipses have much scholarly support: 4 BC (HBC₆₄), 1 BC (HBC₉₈), and AD 1 (some LDS scholars). As evidence is discussed, support for each date will be prefaced with [4 BC], [1 BC], or [AD 1].

Events between Eclipse and Passover

Josephus describes several events as occurring between the eclipse and the Passover.⁷⁰ Table 7 lists each event and three time estimates: (a) “WEEKS” is what Martin considers likely⁷¹, (b) “DAYS” is Martin’s absolute minimum⁷², and (c) “MIN” is Johnson’s revision⁷³ of the “DAYS” column.

Table 7: Events between the Eclipse and Passover

Events	WEEKS	DAYS	MIN
Eclipse night: Herod had two rabbis burned.			
Herod got sicker and had severe abdominal pains and worms, he sent for physicians and considered options.	1	2	2
Herod was taken about 25 miles to hot mineral baths. He returned when treatment failed.	1	3	3
Messengers went to all areas of kingdom with orders for prominent Jewish leaders to come to Jericho. They arrived and were locked in the hippodrome.	1	8	8
Herod’s son, Antipater, was executed. Herod died five days later. Before he died, Herod altered his will to give each of his three sons a part of his kingdom.	1	5	5
Archelaus carried out his father’s wish for the grandest funeral ever bestowed on a king. The funeral was planned. Herod’s body was embalmed and laid in state.	1	3	3
Herod’s body was carried about 25 miles and buried.	4 ⁷⁴	25	2 ⁷⁵
7-day mourning for family began, followed by a feast.	1	7	7 ⁷⁶
Archelaus resumed his duties as king <i>before</i> Passover. He lowered taxes, let prisoners go free, etc. He offered sacrifice and feasted with friends. Public mourning held for two rabbis executed on eclipse night. ⁷⁷	1 ⁷⁸	3	3
TOTAL	11	54	31

The primary argument against the March 4 BC eclipse is that there are only 29 before the next Passover. Martin estimates that it would have taken 10–12 weeks (70–84 days) for all these events. His most conservative estimate was 54 days.⁷⁹ Johnson’s revision was still 31 days.⁸⁰ A second argument is that Herod would not have killed two popular Jewish leaders on the second day of Purim, the night of the eclipse.⁸¹

[4 BC] Most scholars prefer the Mar. 4 BC eclipse but consider the Sept. 5 BC eclipse to be a possibility. Johnson argues that it is possible to squeeze the events into 29 days.

Martin and Johnson have written several articles seeking to refute each other on this issue.⁸² Johnson also believes that “killing two teachers on the last day of Purim was entirely consistent with Herod’s pathological cruelty.”⁸³

Barnes prefers the Sept. 5 BC eclipse because (a) it had a greater amplitude than the one in Mar. 4 BC, (b) Herod could die on 7 Kislev (Dec.), a possibility suggested in the *Megillat Taanit*⁸⁴, and (c) it allows more time “for all the events which Josephus inserts between the eclipse ... and the Passover.”⁸⁵

Maier prefers the 4 BC eclipse for the following reasons.⁸⁶

1. “by inclusive reckoning on the Julian calendar ... 5 BC would mark only the 33rd year since the death of Antigonus (not the 34th), and the 36th following his *de jure* kingship announced by the Romans (not the 37th), as Josephus specifies.”
2. “Herod’s principal successor, Archelaus ... [was] eager to sail to Rome ... [for the] ratification of his own kingship.” It is improbable that he would have waited four months.
3. Herod was in Jericho during the eclipse and given his advancing illness, he would not have been living in Jericho in early September when “it is excessively hot.”

Filmer adds that “in view of the serious deterioration in Herod’s health which Josephus says set in immediately after the eclipse, it does not seem likely that he could have lived much longer than” two weeks.⁸⁷

[1 BC] The preferred eclipse occurred in Jan. 1 BC which is about 90 days before the following Passover.

[AD 1] The preferred eclipse occurred in Dec. 1 BC which is also 90 days before the next Passover.

The primary argument against both the Jan. 1 BC and the Dec. 1 BC eclipse is that all three of Herod’s successors date the start of their reigns to 4 BC. “The problem of Herod’s successors forever condemns [the work of supporters of these dates] ... all arguments should focus here.”⁸⁸ Based on this and other evidence, many scholars would say, “We know how long Herod reigned and when his reign began. Historical and numismatic [coin] evidence are conclusive: Herod died in 4 BC. Try as one might, one cannot escape this fact.”⁸⁹

Chapter 5 discusses the evidence and arguments about Herod's successors. Chapters 6 through 8 discuss evidence and arguments about "how long Herod reigned and when his reign began."

5: Herod's Successors

After Herod died, his kingdom was split among his three sons. Philip died in the 20th year of Tiberius (AD 33/34) after a reign of 37 years. Archelaus was banished in AD 6 in the 10th year of his reign. Antipas reigned 43 years until the 2nd year of Gaius (AD 38/39). “Calculating backwards from these points, all seem to have begun to reign in 5 or 4 BC.” This has usually been “the major reason for accepting 4 BC as the correct date” of Herod’s death. (§516)

Some scholars challenge two assumptions: (a) the dates given by Josephus are accurate, and (b) Herod’s sons started counting the years of their reigns after Herod was dead.

Philip

The current text of Josephus reads that Philip died in the 20th year of Tiberius (AD 33/34). Thus, Herod died in 4 or 3 BC. Filmer (1966) said the Josephus “text should probably read the 22nd year of Tiberius.”⁹⁰ Barnes (1968) rejected this as “comparatively ill-attested.”⁹¹ Since then, Beyer (1995) reported “his personal examination in the British Museum of forty-six editions of Josephus’s *Antiquities* published before 1700.” (§518) All editions of Josephus published before AD 1544 read that Philip died in the 22nd year (AD 35/36) of Tiberius instead of the 20th year (AD 33/34). Assuming Phillip died in AD 35/36 after a 37 year reign, Herod died in 2 or 1 BC. (§518) However, the 37 “year reign was never used before 1544.” The oldest versions also give variant reigns of 32 or 35 years instead of 37 years. A 32 year reign “places the *de facto* inception of Philip’s reign in AD 4.” A 35 year reign “points to AD 1. ... Philip received the title of tetrarch from Caesar Augustus sometime after the War of Varus ended ... in late 1 BC. ... Thus Philip’s appointment as tetrarch most likely took place shortly thereafter, in AD 1. This is the *de jure* date.”⁹² “Since Philip received the tetrarchy upon the death of his father, it would appear that Herod died no earlier than 1 BC.”⁹³

Barnes also referred to a city that Philip built up and renamed Julia, the same name as Augustus' daughter according to Josephus. Since Julia was banished in 2 BC, the city "surely received its name before her disgrace."⁹⁴ However, Martin suggests that the rebuilding wasn't finished until after Julia "was restored from banishment" in AD 4.⁹⁵ Pratt notes that "many Roman colonies were begun throughout the empire named Colonia Julia (or simply Julia), meaning 'Julian Colony.' They were named for the Julian (as in Julius Caesar) emperor (Augustus). ... Josephus also thought that another city named Julia must have been named after Augustus' wife, the mother of Tiberius, but her name was Livia and she was not known as Julia."⁹⁶

Archelaus and Antipas

Josephus says Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip each received a part of Herod's kingdom from Augustus after Herod's death. Josephus does not say they started counting their reigns after Herod died. If Philip did not become king until 1 BC or AD 1 as indicated by the older texts of Josephus, Archelaus and Antipas must have started counting their reigns before Herod died.

Coregency (joint-rule) and antedating were common. Tiberius was a joint-ruler or coregent with Augustus for two years and some scholars use the joint-rule date to develop their chronologies. In the Bible, there are several occasions when a king of Israel or Judah "appointed a son as a coregent and the son's reign overlapped the father's by several years." For example, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Manasseh had 4–24 years of coregency with their father. For four of the six kings these coregency years were included in the total years of their reigns.⁹⁷

After Alexander the Great, antedating examples include "Ptolemy I Soter I of Egypt and Seleucus I Nicator I in Babylon, and there were other examples in the Hellenistic and early Roman period." (¶517) Bickerman said, "An official date is not necessarily the authentic one. When a Hellenistic ruler succeeded in gaining sovereignty, the symbol of which was the

royal title, he often antedated the initial year of his kingship.” Bickerman also “points out that Charles II of England was crowned king on 29 May, 1660 but for political reasons he counted his years of reign from the death of Charles I on 30 January, 1649.”⁹⁸

Obviously, antedating and coregency happened before and after Herod’s death. Before the evidence that Philip became king in 1 BC or AD 1, Barnes argued that Archelaus and Antipas did not actually reign before Herod died.⁹⁹ However, the question is not “did they reign before he died?”, but “did they later antedate their reigns?” Herod, a commoner, married Mariamme of the royal Hasmonean house and had two sons acknowledged as “royal sons.” “Herod had the two royal sons killed and ... promoted Antipater (born of a common woman ...) to be his heir.”¹⁰⁰ While testifying to the Roman governor of Syria, Herod spoke of his son, Antipater, “to whom I have in a manner yielded up my royal authority while I am alive,” and Antipater said “he had no reason to conspire against his father since ‘I was a king already ... you proclaimed me king in your lifetime.’”¹⁰¹ When Antipater’s plot to kill Herod was discovered, Herod had Antipater killed. “Since the Jews ... were used to antedating reigns to give political or dynastic significance to present rulership, why not antedate the reigns of the three Herodian successors back to the deaths of the two ‘royal sons’? ... It not only would have ‘blotted out’ Antipater’s two year joint rule with Herod when he was reckoned as a ‘king,’ but it would have linked up the reigns of the three successors with the two royal children.”¹⁰²

Maier argues that “Josephus was under no necessity to let [Herod’s sons] get away with” lengthening their reigns.¹⁰³ However, Pratt suggests that Josephus did not know “because he knew very little about their reigns. He devoted only one verse in his *Antiquities* to the ten years of Archelaus and only two more to the first thirty years of Antipas and Philip, whereas Herod’s reign required thirty chapters.”¹⁰⁴

Gaius Caesar in Rome after Herod's Funeral

Josephus says that Gaius Caesar was in Rome when Herod's sons, Archelaus and Antipas, came before Augustus in Rome after Herod's death and the following Passover. Roman sources say "Gaius was in Rome in the summer of 2 BC and then went to the Danube frontier," Egypt, and Arabia. "He passed through Palestine in time to enter upon his consulate on 1 January AD 1" in Syria.¹⁰⁵

[4 BC] "The time needed for the operations on the Danube and in Arabia requires him to have left Rome in early spring 1 BC at the very latest." Thus, Herod couldn't have died in 1 BC.¹⁰⁶

[1 BC] "Gaius, the grandson of Augustus, was in Rome in the summer after the eclipse and *this fits perfectly for the summer of 1 BC*, while there is clear history to show that Gaius was in Syria in the summer of AD 1."¹⁰⁷ Gaius left Rome very soon after Archelaus and Antipas came before Augustus.

[AD 1] "Gaius became one of the two consuls of the Roman empire, beginning his term on January 1, AD 1. Normally the consuls resided in Rome, but because of the unsettled conditions, Gaius was stationed in Syria. According to ... Dio Cassius, Gaius made peace in early AD 1 with Phrataces, king of Parthia. He says, 'Nevertheless, war did not break out with the Parthians, either. For Phrataces, hearing that Gaius was in Syria, acting as consul ... forestalled action on their part by coming to terms with the Romans ...' The relatively peaceful interlude that followed would have been *a natural time for Gaius to return to Rome*, even if only for a short visit. In AD 2, the Armenian war began in which Gaius was wounded; he died in AD 4. Thus, AD 1 presents a more plausible scenario than 1 BC for Gaius to have been in Rome after Herod's death."¹⁰⁸

6: *When did Herod Become King?*

Josephus says Herod died “after a reign ... of thirty-seven years, from the date when he was *proclaimed king by the Romans.*” (§503) This refers to the beginning of Herod’s *de jure* (by right or law) kingship when he was a king without a kingdom. About three years later, he began his *de facto* (of fact) kingship when he conquered Jerusalem.

When was Herod proclaimed king?

Josephus gives dates for these two events in terms of “Olympiads” and consuls. “The Olympic games ... were held every four years, and the period of four years from one celebration to the next was know as an ... ‘Olympiad’. ... The first Olympiad ran approximately from July 1, 776, to June 30, 775 BC.” (§185) From 44 BC to 135 AD, each of the four years of an Olympiad began in July and was designated by the two consuls who were in office that year. (§179)

Consular Date (184th). Josephus said Herod was proclaimed king in the 184th Olympiad when Calvinus and Pollio were consuls (*Ant* 14.389 [14.14.5]). The 184th Olympiad ended on June 30, 40 BC. However Calvinus and Pollio became consuls “following the Treaty of Brundisium, 2 October 40 BC” during the first year of the 185th Olympiad.¹⁰⁹ “Another reference of Josephus indicates ... that Herod did not actually go to Rome until winter.” (§501) This too questions the 184th Olympiad reference. Appian (c. 95–165), an ancient Greek historian, “mentions Herod’s appointment by Antony, along with a number of other kings. From the context it is clear that Appian places Herod’s appointment in 39 BC.”¹¹⁰ “Josephus’ notice of Herod’s appointment is somehow in error. Either Herod was appointed late in 40 or sometime in 39 BC, but not in the first half of 40 BC as Josephus’ Olympian synchronism would imply.”¹¹¹

[4 BC] Herod’s reign started “towards the end of 40 BC (the last time ... Antonius and Octavian were in Rome together ...).” Filmer’s argument for 39 BC “has no weight whatever, relying

... solely on a resumptive reference [in Appian] to client kings appointed by Antonius.”¹¹²

[1 BC] & [AD 1] Herod’s reign started late in 39 BC.¹¹³ In 40 BC, “a peace pact was made in October and Antony married Octavia (Dio 48.28). If Herod was made king in this year, it could only have been after October, and even then the friendly relations between Caesar and Antony, described by Josephus, are at variance with their mutual distrust indicated by Dio.” In 39 BC, “Hyrcanus was deposed and Antigonus made ruler (included in Dio 48.26 under the account of the previous year, but he states, 48.34, that the foregoing covered two years). In Italy ... a peace treaty was signed between Caesar, Antony and Sextus. ... At this time, Herod might well have visited Antony in Rome and been made king. In fact, Appian actually names Herod among several petty kings who were appointed by Antony in this year. Finally Antony left Italy for Greece where he stayed the winter.”¹¹⁴

When did Herod conquer Jerusalem?

Josephus says Herod died “after a reign of thirty-four years” from *the date he assumed control of Judea after putting Antigonus to death* (§503). When did this happen? Josephus gives the following clues.

Consular Date (185th). Herod took Jerusalem and Antigonus was killed in the 185th Olympiad when Agrippa and Gallus were consuls. Therefore, Herod “became king in fact by conquest of Jerusalem in the summer or fall of 37 BC.” (§502) Although this consular date indicates Herod conquered Jerusalem in 37 BC, other statements seem to indicate 36 BC.

[4 BC] The consular year of 37 BC is correct. Inclusive counting explains why the other dates seem to indicate 36 BC.¹¹⁵ (The evidence for inclusive counting is discussed in chapter 7.)

[1 BC] and [AD 1] The consular date is incorrect. In his early work, *The Judean War*, Josephus tells of “the appointment of Herod as king” and “the overthrow of Antigonus in Jerusalem” but does not give any dates. “It is clear that Josephus added them in the *Antiquities*. ... But owing to the Roman and Greek

years starting in January and July, while the Jewish and Seleucid years began in Nisan or Tishri, he might easily have made an error of one year. Even Schürer, who accepts the consular year, is obliged to confess that the 184th Olympiad is impossible for the appointment of Herod as king by the Romans.”¹¹⁶

General Sosius. Antony sent General Sosius to help Herod conquer Jerusalem (*Ant* 14.468 [14.16.1]). However, “Dio states ‘...during the following year [37 BC] the Romans accomplished nothing worthy of note in Syria. For Antony spent the entire year reaching Italy and returning again to the province, and Sossius, because anything he did would be advancing Antony’s interests rather than his own, and he therefore dreaded his jealousy and anger, spent the time in devising means, not for achieving some success and incurring his enmity, but for pleasing him without engaging in any activity.’ Thus, Sossius would not have helped Herod—a man favored by Antony—capture Jerusalem in 37.”¹¹⁷

[4 BC] Dio “places the event in the consulship of Claudius and Norbanus who were the predecessors in his list of Agrippa and Gallus, hence in 38 BC.” (§501; *Dio* 49:22–23)

[1 BC] and [AD 1] “A superficial reading of Dio’s account of the capture of Jerusalem by Sosius appears to date this event in ... 38 BC, not 37, ... But actually this date refers back to the departure of Antony for Italy and the appointment of Sosius as general in charge of Syria ... for Dio goes on to say that Sosius did nothing in 37 BC. ... There is no support at all here for the [consular] date given by Josephus, but rather a rebuttal of it. It follows, then, that Sosius captured Jerusalem in 36.”¹¹⁸

Sabbatical Year. Herod “took Jerusalem in a Sabbatical year, on the Day of Atonement.” (§513) During the siege, the people “were distressed by famine and the want of necessities, for this happened to be a Sabbatic year” (*Ant* 14.470 [14.16.2]). Zuckermann’s table of sabbatical years (1856) indicates that 38/37 BC was a sabbatical year. However, Wacholder’s revised table (1973) indicates that 37/36 BC was a sabbatical year. Blosser’s dissertation (1979) supports Zuckermann’s table.

(¶225) For Zuckermann/Blosser and Wacholder the year starts in Tishri (Sept./Oct.). Another source suggests the sabbatical year started in Nisan (Mar./Apr.) 37–36 or Nisan 36–35 (preferred) months *after* Herod took Jerusalem.¹¹⁹

[4 BC] “This presents a considerable difficulty since ... there is good reason to conclude that the year 37 BC (Oct)–36 BC and not the year 38 BC (Oct)–37 BC was sabbatical.”¹²⁰ However, Hoehner says “it is difficult ... to determine whether [the sabbatical year] was Tishri 38, Tishri 37, or Tishri 36, and it is impossible to know if it is referring to the beginning, middle, or end of the sabbatical year.”¹²¹

[1 BC] and [AD 1] “Josephus said that Herod’s siege was during a Sabbatical Year and that a great scarcity of food was evident because of it. Sabbatical Years occur every seventh year on the Jewish calendar. Modern studies of Wacholder and others clearly demonstrate that 36 BC was indeed the end of a Sabbatical Year. ... And, Professor Marcus in his notes to the Loeb edition of Josephus shows that there are very good reasons for believing that the Sabbatical year under discussion was to be reckoned from October, 37 BC to October, 36 BC. Herod would have captured Jerusalem at the end of that sacred period.”¹²²

Counting Years. Josephus states that Herod took Jerusalem a number of years after a previous event.

1. Herod “took Jerusalem ... *exactly twenty-seven years* from the day Pompey took Jerusalem (in 63 BC).” (¶513)
2. When Herod became king, “thus did the *government of the Hasmoneans* cease, one hundred twenty-six years after it was first set up” (*Ant* 14.487-491 [14.16.4]). “In 162 BC ... the Hasmoneans first were acknowledged as authorities who could govern according to traditional Jewish law.”¹²³

Depending on how Josephus counted the years, these statements indicate Herod conquered Jerusalem in either 37 BC or in 36 BC. The next chapter introduces the common Jewish methods of counting years.

7: How were Herod's Years Counted?

Josephus said, “Herod ... died, having *reigned thirty-four years* since he had caused Antigonus to be slain, and obtained his kingdom; but *thirty-seven years* since he had been made king by the Romans” (*War* 1.665 [1.33.8]). Since Josephus does not tell us how he counted these years, this has been a issue of debate.

Regnal Years

Each year of a king's reign is called a “regnal” year. (¶163) A regnal year can have various meanings.

1. A *factual* year began when a man became king.
2. A regnal year usually referred to a *calendar* year. During the time of Herod, three common calendars were in use.
 - a. The *Julian* year began 1 Jan.
 - b. The *Nisan* year started in Nisan (Mar/Apr). This was the Jewish religious calendar. The Babylonian/Assyrian calendar also began in Nisan (Mar/Apr).
 - c. The *Tishri* year started in Tishri (Sept/Oct). This was Jewish civil calendar. The *Syro-Macedonian* year began Oct. 1 which is about the same as the Tishri year.
3. When a new king replaced the old king in the middle of a calendar year, who was credited with that regnal year?
 - a. Using the *accession* year system, the new king's first partial year was called his *accession* year, and his first regnal year began at the start of the next calendar year. With the *accession* year system, accession year of a new king is counted only once. It is the last regnal year of the old king, but not the first year of the new king.
 - b. Using the *non-accession* year (*inclusive*) system, the *accession* year is counted twice. It is both the first regnal year of the new king and the last regnal year of the old king. Thus, if three kings each reigned for one year beginning in May, the non-accession or inclusive counting would give each king two regnal years. If we

added their regnal years, we would get six regnal years but only three factual years.¹²⁴

Which method did Josephus use in reporting Herod's regnal years? Since Josephus does not say, scholars make educated guesses based on their interpretation of the evidence.

Mishnah

The Mishnah (c. AD 200) is part of the Talmud and contains the Jewish Oral Law taught by the rabbis (Pharisees). Nisan is the first month of the Jewish year and Adar is the last.

If a king ascended the throne on the twenty-ninth of Adar, as soon as the first of Nisan arrives he is reckoned to have reigned a year. If on the other hand he ascended the throne on the first of Nisan, he is not reckoned to have *reigned a year till the next first of Nisan comes round*. ... You might think that in that case we should reckon him [by the next Nisan] to have reigned two years. We are therefore told [that *this is not so*]. ... If [a king] died in Adar and was succeeded by another in Adar, we can designate [the rest of] the year [up to the first of Nisan] *as belonging to either*. ... The rule [that New Year for kings is in Nisan] was only meant to apply to the kings of Israel, but *the years of non-Israelitish kings are reckoned from Tishri*. ...

How do we know ... that the years of kings' reigns are always reckoned as commencing from Nisan? Because ... [in 1 Kgs. 6:1] Solomon's reign is put side by side with the exodus from Egypt, [to indicate that] just as [the years from] the exodus from Egypt are reckoned from Nisan so [the years of] *Solomon's reign commenced with Nisan*. (*Talmud*, Rosh HaShanah 2a–2b; brackets in original)

The Mishnah describes the Nisan (non-accession) system, but suggests two ways of counting: (1) the regnal year, e.g., 34th, which began in Nisan (Mar/Apr) of the year a king ascended the throne and (b) the number of regnal years completed. Similar methods of counting are used in track races (a runner starts his second lap after completing one lap) and with birthdays (a person is age 34 during his entire 35th year).

Old Testament

Thiele's analysis of the Old Testament comes to a different conclusion than that of the rabbis quoted in the Mishnah. "A *Tishri-to-Tishri year* was used in the reckoning of Solomon's reign." "Perhaps the strongest argument for the use of a Tishri-

to-Tishri regnal year in Judah is that this method works, giving us a harmonious pattern of the regnal years and synchronisms, while with a Nisan-to-Nisan regnal year the old discrepancies would be retained.” When Judah and Israel became separate kingdoms in 931 BC, Israel used the non-accession-year system and Judah used the accession-year system. From about 850 BC to 796 BC, Judah either used the non-accession-year system or shifted from a Tishri to a Nisan calendar year.¹²⁵ After 796 BC both used the Tishri accession-year system. “This shift to the accession-year system in both Israel and Judah is ... connected with the growth of Assyrian influence ... and may point to a rather wide adoption of this system of reckoning in these areas at this time.” *Judah used the accession-year system* from king Amaziah (796–767 BC) to king Zedekiah (597–586 BC). “The best argument for the correctness of the above outline ... is that it works, giving us a chronological scheme of the kings of Israel and Judah in which there is internal consistency and which harmonizes with the chronological pattern of neighboring states.”¹²⁶

Inclusive Counting

Inclusive counting is when part of the first and last year is counted as a full year. The Bible has examples of inclusive counting of years other than non-accession regnal years.

1. “*In the fourth year* of king Hezekiah ... [the] king of Assyria came up against Samaria. ... And *at the end of three years* they took it: even *in the sixth year* of Hezekiah ...” (2 Kgs. 18:9–10).
2. “And they continued *three years* without war between Syria and Israel. And ... *in the third year*,” the kings of Judah and Israel fought against Syria. (1 Kgs 22:1–2, 29–31)

Other examples where a part of a day is counted as a full day will be given later when crucifixion dates are discussed.

The Jews commonly used inclusive counting when referring to days and years. However, they used the accession (non-inclusive) system to count regnal years between 931 and 586 BC with the possible exception of 54 years (850–796 BC).

How did Josephus Count Herod's Regnal Years?

Answers to this question depend on when Herod died.

[4 BC] Josephus used the Nisan (non-accession) year system to count regnal years and counted part of the first and part of the last year each as a full year. Schürer says “Since Josephus states that [Herod] reigned 37 years from the date of his appointment (40 BC), 34 years from his conquest of Jerusalem, 37 BC ..., it might appear as though he died in 3 BC. But we know that *Josephus reckons one year too many*—according to our method of counting: e.g. 27 years from the conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey to its conquest by Herod ..., whereas it is only 26 (63–37 BC); 107 years from the conquest by Herod to that by Titus ..., whereas it is only 106 (37 BC–AD 70). He counts the spring of 31 BC as Herod’s seventh year ... whereas it was only the sixth from July 37 BC. From this it is evident that he *reckoned the portions of a year as full years [inclusive counting]*, and probably counted regnal years as the Mishnah suggests *from Nisan to Nisan.*”¹²⁷

[1 BC] Josephus used the Tishri or Nisan (accession) year system. “In general it would be necessary to know whether Herod’s regnal reign began on 1 Nisan or 1 Tishri, but it so happens that this is immaterial for calculating the year of Herod’s death.”¹²⁸ Filmer says, “It is true that by either accession-year or non-accession-year reckoning the first few days of the new year would count as a full year, but unfortunately the statement that the new year for kings was 1 Nisan is supported only by a fallacious argument purporting to show that Solomon’s regnal years began in Nisan. It has been clearly demonstrated by E. R. Thiele that not only did Solomon’s regnal years begin on 1 Tishri, but so also did those of all the kings of Judah down to Zedekiah. ... If, then, the reigns of Solomon and the kings of Judah are to be regarded as a precedent for Herod’s regnal years, we must reject Schürer’s theory that they began in Nisan.”¹²⁹

The accession year system was “most commonly used in western Asia. ... The accession-year rule is clearly the more practical, since the interval between two events separated by

several reigns could be readily calculated by simply adding together the reigns of the intervening kings. Under the non-accession rule, straight forward addition would give an excess of one year for every reign involved. This fact provides a simple means of checking which system Josephus used.”¹³⁰

27 Years

According to Josephus, Herod “took Jerusalem ... *exactly twenty-seven years* from the day Pompey took Jerusalem (in 63 BC).” (§513) “The statement ... that Herod took Jerusalem on the same day on which it was captured by Pompey twenty-seven years before, points according to some ... to 36 BC, according to others to 37 BC, while yet others think that Josephus made a mistake in calculation and so has given here twenty-seven instead of twenty-six.”¹³¹

[4 BC] If Herod conquered Jerusalem in 37 BC as indicated by the consular date, only 26 (63-37 BC) years had passed “from the conquest of Pompey to its conquest by Herod.” Therefore, Josephus used inclusive counting here.

[1 BC] and [AD 1] If 27 years is correct, Herod conquered Jerusalem on *25 Oct 36 BC* instead of 37 BC, the consular date was incorrect again and Josephus did not use inclusive counting. “Pompey reinstated Hyrcanus II as high priest in 63 BC and Hyrcanus reigned twenty-four more years (to 39 BC), followed by Antigonus’ reign of three years and three months. The total is twenty-seven years, three months. Since Hyrcanus would have been reinstated in September (Tishri) 63 BC, Antigonus would have been executed in December 36 BC.”¹³² The *27 year reign of these high priests* matches the exact interval between the summer of 63 and the autumn of 36 BC, when Herod captured Jerusalem.”¹³³

107 Years

Josephus said, “the number of high priests, from the time of Herod until the day when Titus took the temple and the city, and burnt them, were in all *twenty-eight*; the time, also, that belonged to them was a *hundred and seven years*.” (*Ant* 20.250 [20.10.5])

[4 BC] Bernegger used this as evidence of inclusive counting and to refute Filmer’s arguments against it. “The ‘time of Herod’ refers to the period after Antigonus was slain. ... The siege and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus occurred in AD 70. Counting back 107 factual years from AD 70 results in the date 38 BC for the deposition of Antigonus, but 38 BC is two years earlier than the date proposed by Filmer. ... The 107-year figure cannot represent the number of factual years between the deposition of Antigonus and the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Therefore, it must have been derived with the *inclusive* method of counting. ... Hence, the 107-year figure confirms that 37 BC is the correct date of Antigonus’ deposition. ... In fact, both the 27 and the 107-year figures only make sense when interpreted inclusively. ... When both figures are reckoned inclusively, 37 BC is the resulting date in either case.”¹³⁴

[1 BC] and [AD 1] Josephus says “there were *twenty-eight* high priests from ‘the times of Herod’ until the destruction of the temple in AD 70. When Herod conquered Jerusalem, he appointed Ananel to be high priest. Counting high priests beginning with Ananel and ending with Pannias, the last high priest before Titus conquered Jerusalem, there were twenty-seven high priests. *This means that Josephus was including Antigonus in his reckoning of twenty-eight high priests during the reign of Herod.* Therefore, Josephus began the ‘times of Herod’ with Herod’s appointment by Rome three years earlier than his conquest of Jerusalem. According to the Schürer consensus this would mean that there were 109, not 107 years from ‘the times of Herod’ to Titus’ conquest of Jerusalem.

“However, Herod was actually appointed late in 39 BC. ... Since Herod was appointed by a Gentile power, he probably began to count his official regnal years as beginning on the

following Tishri (Sept./Oct.) of 38 BC (since the Jewish civil year began on Tishri). He may have counted his years as beginning in Nisan (March/April) of 38, but this is less likely. ... Herod's first coins, issued to replace Hasmonean currency, are also the first dated Jewish coins. They are dated to 'year three.' Clearly, Herod counted the year he first reigned in Jerusalem as the third year of his reign. This means that he counted his first regnal year as beginning no later than Tishri 38 BC and issued his first coinage shortly after conquering Jerusalem in 36 BC. Therefore, Herod's first regnal year would have ended on the last day of Elul in 37 BC, making his one hundred seventh regnal year end in Elul 70 BC. Since the temple fell in Ab 70 BC, eleven months into Herod's one hundred seventh regnal year, Josephus' report in *Antiquities* 20.250 is absolutely correct."¹³⁵

126 Years

When Herod became king, "thus did the *government of the Hasmoneans* cease, one hundred twenty-six years after it was first set up" (*Ant* 14.487-491 [14.16.4]).

[4 BC] Josephus probably used inclusive counting here too.

[1 BC] and [AD 1] Both Josephus and 1 Maccabees report that in 162 BC, "Antiochus V made peace with Judas Maccabeus: '...the king sent to Judas, and to those that were besieged with them, and promised to give them peace, and to permit them to make use of, and live according to the laws of their fathers.' Thus, it was in 162 BC that the Hasmoneans first were acknowledged as authorities who could govern according to traditional Jewish law. Subsequently, Judas behaved as if he had such authority over a sovereign state—as exemplified by his treaty of 'the Jewish nation' with Rome."¹³⁶ This also indicates that Herod replaced Antigonus, a Hasmonean, in 36 BC (162 BC – 126 years).

Herod's Regnal Years

Table 8 shows events that Josephus said occurred in one of Herod's regnal years.

Table 8: Josephus' References to Herod's Regnal Years

Reference	Regnal Year	Event
<i>Ant</i> 15.121*	7 th	Battle of Actium (Sept. 2, 31 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.299	14 th	Gallus' expedition.
<i>Ant</i> 15.354	18 th , "after Herod had reigned seventeen years"	Caesar in Syria (Spring 20 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.380 <i>War</i> 1.401	18 th 15 th	Work on temple begun
<i>Ant</i> 16.136	28 th	Work on Caesarea Sebaste completed

* *Ant* 15.121 [15.5.2], 15.299 [15.9.1], 15.354 [15.10.3], 15.380 [15.11.1], 16.136 [16.5.1]; *War* 1.401 [1.21.1]

[4 BC] Josephus "counts the spring of 31 BC as Herod's seventh year ... whereas it was only the sixth from July 37 BC. From this it is evident that he reckoned the portions of a year as full years [*inclusive* counting], and probably counted regnal years ... from Nisan to Nisan."¹³⁷

Table 9: Schürer's Dates for Herod's Regnal Years

Reference	Regnal Year	Event
	1 st (Nisan 37/36 BC)	Conquest of Jerusalem (July? 37 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.121	7 th (31/30 BC)	Battle of Actium (Sept. 2, 31 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.299	14 th (24/23 BC)	Gallus' expedition.
<i>Ant</i> 15.354	18 th (20/19 BC)	Caesar in Syria (Spring 20 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.380 <i>War</i> 1.401	18 th (20/19 BC) 15 th (Error? *)	Work on temple begun.
<i>Ant</i> 16.136	28 th (10/9 BC)	Work on Caesarea Sebaste completed

* According to Schürer, this date "is either incorrect or refers to the start of building preparations. That the construction began in 20/19 BC is certain."¹³⁸

[1 BC] and [AD 1] "In *Antiquities* Josephus numbered Herod's regnal years from his appointment by the Romans. Late 39 BC until the beginning of Tishri 38 BC was Herod's accession year. Tishri 38 BC through Elul 37 BC was Herod's first official regnal year. The conclusion then follows that the other regnal dates for Herod found in Josephus also count his regnal years from his appointment by the Romans.

Table 10: Steinmann's Dates for Herod's Regnal Years

Reference	Regnal Year	Event
	1st (Tishri 38/37 BC)	Herod's appointment (late 39 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.121	7th (32/31 BC)	Battle of Actium (Sept. 2, 31 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.299	14th (25/24 BC)	Gallus' expedition.
<i>Ant</i> 15.354	18th (21/20 BC)	Caesar in Syria (Spring 20 BC)
<i>Ant</i> 15.380	18th (21/20 BC)	Work on temple begun
<i>War</i> 1.401	15th (21/20 BC)	(15 th from when Jerusalem conquered)
<i>Ant</i> 16.136	28th (11/10 BC)	Work on Caesarea Sebaste completed

“There is no need to claim that the reference in *War* 1.401 [15th year] is a mistake. Instead, it is now clear that in *War* Josephus numbered Herod's regnal years from the beginning of his reign in Jerusalem, and they would total three less years. Thus, Josephus reports that Herod reigned ‘...since he had procured Antigonus to be slain, thirty-four years; but since he had been declared king by the Romans, thirty-seven.’”¹³⁹

8: Herod Died Having Reigned 34/37 Years

Josephus said, “Herod ... died, having *reigned thirty-four years* since he had caused Antigonus to be slain, and obtained his kingdom; but *thirty-seven years* since he had been made king by the Romans” (*War* 1.665 [I.33.8]) . Herod’s *de jure* (by right or law) kingship began when he was “made king” and three years later, his *de facto* (of fact) kingship when he conquered Jerusalem and “obtained his kingdom.”

Herod’s 37th *de jure* Year

Herod’s *de jure* kingship began when he was “made king.” Table 11 shows the possible dates of Herod’s 37th regnal year (*de jure*) depending on the calendar used.

Table 11: Herod’s 37th Regnal Year (*de jure*)

37th Year of Herod’s Reign (Starts when Herod was proclaimed king by Romans)		
Regnal Years	Late 40 BC	Late 39 BC
Factual	Oct-Dec?, 4 BC – 3 BC	Oct-Dec?, 3 BC – 2 BC
Julian (non-accession)	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 4 BC	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 3 BC
Julian (accession)	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 3 BC	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2 BC
Tishri* (non-accession)	Tishri 1, 4 BC – 3 BC	Tishri 1, 3 BC – 2 BC
Tishri (accession)	Tishri 1, 3 BC – 2 BC	Tishri 1, 2 BC – 1 BC
Nisan (non-accession)	Nisan 1, 4 BC – 3 BC	Nisan 1, 3 BC – 2 BC
Nisan (accession)	Nisan 1, 3 BC – 2 BC	Nisan 1, 2 BC – 1 BC

* 1 Tishri (Sept/Oct) is close to the Syro-Macedonian year beginning 1 Oct.

[4 BC] Herod became king in late 40 BC. (§501) Using the Nisan (non-accession) year, Herod’s 37th *de jure* year was 1 Nisan (29 Mar.) 4–3 BC. (§503)

[1 BC] Herod became king in late 39 BC. Using the Nisan or Tishri (accession) year, Herod’s 37th *de jure* year was 1 Nisan (5 Apr.) 2–1 BC or 1 Tishri (29 Sept.) 2–1 BC. Herod died in Jan. 1 BC before his 38th regnal year began.¹⁴⁰

[AD 1] Herod became king in late 39 BC. Using the Nisan or Tishri (accession) year, Herod’s 37th *de jure* year was 1 Nisan (5 Apr.) 2–1 BC or 1 Tishri (29 Sept.) 2–1 BC. Josephus said “having reigned” 37 years. According to the Mishnah, a king “is

not reckoned to *have reigned a year*” until the end of the calendar year.¹⁴¹ At the start of this year, Herod had only reigned 36 years. Thus, Herod died in Jan. of the next year (AD 1) after he had reigned 37 years.

Herod’s 34th *de facto* Year

Herod’s *de facto* kingship began when he conquered Jerusalem and “obtained his kingdom.” Table 12 shows possible dates of Herod’s 34th regnal year (*de facto*) depending on the calendar used.

Table 12: Herod’s 37th Regnal Year (*de facto*)

34th Year of Herod’s Reign		
(Starts when Herod captured Jerusalem)		
Regnal Years	37 BC	Oct 25, 36 BC
Factual	Aug-Oct?, 4 BC – 3 BC	Oct. 25, 3 BC – 2 BC
Julian (non-accession)	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 4 BC	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 3 BC
Julian (accession)	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 3 BC	Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, 2 BC
Tishri* (non-accession)	Tishri 1, 4/5 BC – 3/4 BC	Tishri 1, 3 BC – 2 BC
Tishri (accession)	Tishri 1, 3/4 BC – 2/3 BC	Tishri 1, 2 BC – 1 BC
Nisan (non-accession)	Nisan 1, 4 BC – 3 BC	Nisan 1, 3 BC – 2 BC
Nisan (accession)	Nisan 1, 3 BC – 2 BC	Nisan 1, 2 BC – 1 BC

* 1 Tishri (Sept/Oct) is close to the Syro-Macedonian year beginning 1 Oct.

[4 BC] Herod conquered Jerusalem in 37 BC. (¶502) Using the Nisan (non-accession) year, Herod’s 37th *de facto* year was Mar. 29, 4 BC–3 BC. (¶503)

Josephus “reckoned the portions of a year as full years [inclusive counting], and probably counted regnal years as the Mishnah suggests *from Nisan to Nisan*. ... If this be the case, Herod’s 34th year began on 1 Nisan of 4 BC and since he died before Passover, his death must have taken place between 1 and 14 Nisan 4 BC. This reckoning is confirmed by an astronomical datum [lunar eclipse] and the chronology of Herod’s successors.”¹⁴²

[1 BC] Herod became king on Oct 25, 36 BC. Using the Nisan (accession) year, Herod’s 34th *de facto* year was 1 Nisan (5 Apr.), 2 BC–1 BC. (¶513) Herod died in Jan. 1 BC before his 35th regnal year began.¹⁴³

[AD 1] Herod became king on Oct 25, 36 BC. Using the Nisan (accession) year, Herod's 34th *de facto* year was 1 Nisan (5 Apr.), 2 BC–1 BC. Josephus said “having reigned” 34 years. According to the Mishnah, a king “is not reckoned to *have reigned a year*” until the end of the calendar year.¹⁴⁴ At the start of this year Herod had only reigned 33 years. Thus, Herod died in Jan. of the next year (AD 1) after he had reigned 34 years.

Herod was about 70

About 4–6 months before he died, Herod “despaired of recovering, for he was *about* the seventieth year of his age” (*Ant* 17.148 [17.6.1]). Since Herod was twenty-five years old when he was appointed governor of Galilee in 47 BC¹⁴⁵, he would have been 70 in 2 BC. Depending on the month of his birthday and the month of his appointment, he could have been almost 71 or just barely 70 in the later part of 2 BC. If “about” means 66–74, none of the three Passovers is excluded. If it means 69–71, 4 BC would be excluded.

[4 BC] Herod's “death ought to fall before 2 BC; and there is no difficulty at all if it fell in 5/4.”¹⁴⁶ Since Herod would have been 66/67 in 5 BC, “about” appears to mean between 66–74.

[1 BC] Herod would have been 69/70 in 2 BC.

[AD 1] Herod would have been 70/71 in 1 BC.

Part III: BIRTH, BAPTISM AND BURIAL

9: Birth of Jesus

According to the New Testament, Jesus was born some time before king Herod died. However, we have no direct, primary evidence (e.g., birth record) of the year Jesus was born. Therefore, scholars rely on their interpretations of indirect, secondary evidence that is often inconsistent or ambiguous.

Early Christian Sources

Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus (Lk 2:1) who reigned from 44 BC to AD 14. “The birth of Jesus [was] given in terms of years of Augustus by [14] early Christian scholars and historians who lived from the second to the sixth centuries.” These included Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Orosius, and Dionysius Exiguus. Seven said Jesus was born *between* the 40th and 42nd year of Caesar Augustus in Rome. All but one of them said Jesus was born between 3 BC and AD 1. (¶486–500)

Table 13: Augustus’ Reign in Rome (40th and 42nd Years)

	40 th Year	42 nd Year
Factual Years	Mar. 17, 5–4 BC	Mar. 17, 3–2 BC
Julian Years (non-accession)	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 5 BC	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 3 BC
Julian Years (accession)	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 4 BC	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, 2 BC
Tishri Years (non-accession)	Tishri 1, 6–5 BC	Tishri 1, 4–3 BC
Tishri Years (accession)	Tishri 1, 5–4 BC	Tishri 1, 3–2 BC
Nisan Years (non-accession)	Nisan 1, 6–5 BC	Nisan 1, 4–3 BC
Nisan Years (accession)	Nisan 1, 5–4 BC	Nisan 1, 3–2 BC

[4 BC] Since Herod died in 4 BC, these early Christian sources based their conclusions on faulty evidence or reasoning.

[1 BC] Most of these early Christian sources agree that Jesus was born after 4 BC and before 1 BC.

[AD 1] Almost all early Christian sources agree that Jesus was born after the 4 BC eclipse.

Tax of Quirinius

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.)” (NIV Lk 2:1–2). The Greek word for “tax” in the KJV can also be translated as enrollment, census, or registration (§525).

Schürer believes Luke made a mistake. Two of his five reasons are: “(a) History does not otherwise record a general imperial census in the time of Augustus, ... and (e) Quirinius was never governor of Syria during Herod’s lifetime.”¹⁴⁷ Hoehner¹⁴⁸ and others have responded to these issues.

Tertullian (c. AD 155–230), an early Christian writer, “states that the enrollment at the time of the birth of Jesus was ‘taken in Judea by Sentius Saturninus,’ and ... for Tertullian ... the date of the nativity was 3/2 BC.” Without any direct evidence indicating who was governor each year between 9 BC and AD 1, the two possible lists in Table 14 are based on interpretations of evidence that depend on when one assumes Herod died. Josephus indicates that Saturninus was governor for the two years before Varus succeeded him not long before Herod died (*Ant* 17.23 [17.2.1]; 17.89 [17.5.2]). Each list assumes that either Quirinius or Varus was governor twice.¹⁴⁹ (§522) Differences in the two lists are bolded.

Table 14: Governors of Syria¹⁵⁰

Traditional		Revised	
10–9 BC	M. Titius	Prior to 7 BC	M. Titius
9–6 BC	C. Saturninus	7/6–4 BC	P. Varus₁
6–4 BC	P. Varus	4–2 BC	C. Saturninus
3–2 (?) BC	P. Quirinius₁	2 BC – AD 1	P. Varus₂
1 BC – AD 4	G. Caesar	AD 1 – 4	G. Caesar
AD 4–5	L. Saturninus	AD 4–5	L. Saturninus
AD 6–7	P. Quirinius ₂	AD 6–7	P. Quirinius

The Greek word for “governor” (Lk 2:2) means “procurator” in Luke 3:1. Thus, Quirinius may have been a procurator assigned by Saturninus, the governor of Syria, for the registration or census. (§522)

[4 BC] “The claim that no non-Christian record exists of a universal Roman census ordered by Augustus is still valid. ... Luke rather intends here a provincial census of noncitizens for purposes of taxation, and many records of such provincial registrations under Augustus have survived.”¹⁵¹

The Greek could mean, “This census took place *before* Quirinius was governor of Syria” (Lk 2:2) in AD 6–7 and possibly in 3–2 BC. This census “was probably taken sometime between 6 and 4 BC, preferably the latter part of this span of time.”¹⁵²

“An alternative suggestion ... [is] that since it took forty years to complete one of the censuses in Gaul, the registration process could have begun under Herod, but then been completed under Quirinius. ... Quirinius, in any case, helps but little in dating the Nativity.”¹⁵³

[1 BC] A registration or “oath of loyalty” must have been taken because “the whole people gave [Augustus] the title of Father of my Country” on 5 Feb 2 BC. Such a registration may have taken a year or more. Some assume that it ended prior to the title being conferred. (§525) “Josephus records that over 6,000 Pharisees refused to pledge their good will to Caesar (about a year or so before Herod died), probably referring to that oath because the census would have recorded how many refused. Orosius (a fifth century historian) clearly links an oath to the registration at the birth of Christ:

[Augustus] ordered that a census be taken of each province everywhere and that all men be enrolled. So at that time, Christ was born and was entered on the Roman census list as soon as he was born. This is the earliest and most famous public acknowledgment which marked Caesar as the first of all men and the Romans as lords of the world ... that first and greatest census was taken, since in this one name of Caesar all the peoples of the great nations took oath, and at the same time, through the participation in the census, were made part of one society.

“He identified the time of the census using two Roman systems that both agree to indicate 2 BC. This implies a lower limit for Herod's death of 2 BC.”¹⁵⁴

[AD 1] “The birth of Christ in 1 BC fits the 2 BC timing of the enrollment described by Orosius very well. He assumed that Christ was born in the year the decree was made (2 BC), but

Luke says the decree was made ‘in those days’ (Lk 2:1), referring back to when John the Baptist had been born about six months earlier in 2 BC (Lk 1:26).”¹⁵⁵

The Star

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men from the East told Herod they had come to worship the King of the Jews because they had “seen his star in the east.” Some believe the star is mythical, some believe it was miraculous, and others look for “an actual celestial phenomenon.” (§527)

The ancients did not differentiate between stars and planets. “The Greek word from which our word for planet is derived refers ... to a wanderer, that is, a wandering star.”¹⁵⁶

[4 BC] “There was a remarkable planetary conjunction in 7 BC and in 5 BC and again in 4 BC a comet or nova, certainly an extraordinary event, appeared as well. ... The hypothesis that the Star of the Magi was a nova gains much in strength when we learn that in the year 5 BC there appeared a nova, which has been observed by Chinese star-gazers. There are two different sources about this very likely splendid phenomenon; the one tells that the nova was seen during 70 days, the second that it was seen during more than 70 days. Thus the Magi could have proper time to make a trip from any Eastern country to Jerusalem during the time of visibility of this nova.” (§542)

[2 BC] “In the years 3 and 2 BC, there were no comets or novae, but there were planetary and stellar events even more striking than those of 7 and 6 BC.” (§550) On 12 Aug. 3 BC, Jupiter (the king planet) and Venus (a female) were almost touching in the constellation of Leo (lion, Judah) near Regulus (the king star). On 17 June 2 BC, Jupiter and Venus were so close that they would have looked to the naked eye like a single star. On 25 Dec. 2 BC, Jupiter was in the constellation Virgo (virgin) directly over Bethlehem as viewed from Jerusalem where the wise men were. (§551) Martin believes Jesus was born 11 Sept. 3 BC because the sun clothed Virgo, the virgin, and the moon was under her feet at that time as prophesied (Rev 12:1–3).¹⁵⁷

[1 BC]

The conjunction of Jupiter and Venus on June 17, 2 BC was so close that the two planets would have appeared to touch each other.

Calculations indicate that there has never been a brighter, closer conjunction of Venus and Jupiter so near to the bright star Regulus in Leo in the 2000 years before or since.

It is hard to know how the magi might have read ‘signs’ in the heavens, but it has been noted that Jupiter/Jesus was the father god and was often associated with the birth of kings, that Venus was the mother, or goddess of fertility, and that Leo, with the bright king-star Regulus, was the ‘king’ constellation associated with Judah and royalty. Thus, this combination seems to be a natural to be interpreted as the coming of the ‘King of the Jews’ (Mt 2:2).

It has also been noted that when the two planets ‘fused into one’ they would have appeared to be in a ‘marriage union’ with each other. Associating that conjunction with the time of the conception of Christ not only fits his proposed birth in 1 BC, it also dovetails with two ancient traditions mentioned by the fourth century Christian father Epiphanius. First, he held that the conception of Christ occurred on June 20, which is very close to the June 17 conjunction. Secondly, he also noted a tradition that the pregnancy lasted ten months, which is a perfect fit because the conjunction occurred near the full moon ten lunar months [about 295 days] before the following Passover.

...Note that the magi found Jesus at Bethlehem, which means they probably arrived within 50 days of Jesus’ birth because Joseph and Mary would have stayed in Bethlehem that long to present Jesus at the temple after 40 days (Lk 2:22) and to attend Pentecost after 50 days, but then would have returned to Nazareth. Yet Herod slew the infants from two years and under according to the time the star had appeared (Mt 2:7,16). Why two years, if the star had appeared less than two months before? It seems to imply that *the magi mentioned a sign of the conception* and Herod was making sure they had not mistaken the birth for conception.¹⁵⁸

The Day

Dec. 25, Jan. 6, and May 20 are ancient recorded nativity dates. (¶552–553) The first two dates are popular among non-LDS scholars. Many LDS writers prefer April 6th based on D&C 20:1 and statements by LDS leaders.

[4 BC] Dec. 5 BC or Jan. 4 BC are common dates. Some LDS scholars suggest 6 April 5 BC.

[1 BC] Dec. 3 BC or Jan. 2 BC are common dates. However, Martin believes Jesus was born Sept. 11, 3 BC.¹⁵⁹

[AD 1] Talmage said Jesus was born 6 April 1 BC.¹⁶⁰

10: Baptism and Ministry of Jesus

John the Baptist began baptizing *in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar*. After John baptized “the people,” he baptized Jesus. And Jesus “*began to be about thirty years of age*” (Lk 3:21–23). These verses provide a clue as to the year Jesus was born.

15th Year of Tiberius

Tiberius began to rule jointly with Augustus in Oct. AD 12. After Augustus died two years later (19 Aug. AD 14), the Roman senate met on 17 Sept. AD 14 and voted for Tiberius to become the new ruler. Is the 15th year counted from the joint rule date in AD 12 or from the succession date in AD 14? With one apparent exception, “ancient sources do *not* count Tiberius’s own reign from what was only his joint rule with Augustus.” Table 15 shows what the 15th year would be in several calendar systems of the time for each date. (¶570–8)

Table 15: The 15th Year of Tiberius’ Reign

Counted from:	Succession	Joint Rule
Factual Years	Aug. 19, AD 28–29	Oct. AD 26 – 27
Julian Years (non-accession)	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, AD 28	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, AD 26
Julian Years (accession)	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, AD 29	Jan. 1–Dec. 31, AD 27
Tishri Years (non-accession)	Tishri 1, AD 27–28	Tishri 1, AD 26–27
Tishri Years (accession)	Tishri 1, AD 28–29	Tishri 1, AD 27–28
Nisan Years (non-accession)	Nisan 1, AD 28–29	Nisan 1, AD 26–27
Nisan Years (accession)	Nisan 1, AD 29–30	Nisan 1, AD 27–28

[4 BC] John started baptizing in AD 26 (joint-rule, non-accession), 28 (succession, non-accession), or 29 (succession, accession). “Since Luke was writing to a Roman official, ... he reckoned from either [Julian accession years or factual years]. Both of these methods were used by Roman historians.”¹⁶¹ Hoehner believes “John the Baptist’s ministry began sometime in AD 29.” He rejects the joint rule method “because there is no evidence, either from historical documents or coins, for its employment where as there is abundant evidence that Tiberius reckoned his first year after the death of Augustus.”¹⁶²

[1 BC] and [AD 1] Using Julian-years (accession), Finegan accepts Jan. 1 – Dec. 31, AD 29 as the 15th year. (¶583)

“About thirty years of age”

When Jesus was baptized, he “*began to be about thirty years of age*” (Lk 3:23). Other translations say that Jesus “*was about thirty years old when he began his ministry*” (NIV Lk 3:23; RSV).

Jesus was baptized shortly after John started baptizing in the summer or fall of the 15th year of Tiberius (AD 26 or 29). Table 16 shows the age of Jesus at baptism for several possible birthdates. It also shows the age of Jesus at the next Passover when his “public” ministry definitely began.

Table 16: Jesus’ Age in 15th Year of Tiberius

Birthdates	Age at Baptism		Age at Next Passover	
	Oct AD 29	Oct AD 26	Apr AD 30	Apr AD 27
Jan. 6 BC or Dec. 7 BC	34.8	31.8	35.3	32.3
Apr. 5 BC	33.5	30.5	34	31
Jan. 4 BC OR Dec. 5 BC	32.8	29.8	33.3	31.3
Apr. 4 BC	32.5	29.5	33	30
Jan. 2 BC or Dec. 3 BC	30.8	27.8	31.3	28.3
Apr. 2 BC	30.5	27.5	31	28
Apr. 1 BC	29.5	26.5	30	27

What does “about 30” mean? The three most common answers are:

1. **“Almost 30”** Some ancient writers (e.g., Irenaeus and Epiphanius) interpret “about” as meaning almost 30 years old (¶587). If Herod died in 4 BC, Jesus was baptized in AD 26 (co-regency). If Herod died in 1 BC, Jesus was baptized in 28 (non-accession). If Herod died in AD 1, Jesus was baptized in 29.
2. **“Between 29 and 31”** If Herod died in 4 BC, Jesus was baptized in AD 26 (co-regency). If Herod died in 1 BC, Jesus was baptized in 29. If Herod died in AD 1, Jesus was baptized in 29.
3. **“Between 26 and 34”** If Herod died in 4 BC, Jesus was baptized in AD 29 or 26 (co-regency). If Herod died in 1 BC, Jesus was baptized in 29 or 26. If Herod died in AD 1, Jesus

was baptized in 29 or 26. If “about 30” is interpreted this broadly, it is not very useful in determining when Jesus was baptized or born.

The rejection of the “26 to 34” interpretation of “about 30” may be a major reason for: (a) proposing a later death date for Herod,¹⁶³ (b) proposing that Jesus was born four months before Herod died, and (c) proposing that the 15th year of Tiberius be counted from his co-regency, two years before he succeeded Augustus.

[4 BC] Herod died in 4 BC. Therefore, if the 15th year of Tiberius is counted from his succession, “about 30” must mean “26 to 34” years old. If Jesus was born in Dec. 5 BC or Jan. 4 BC, he was about 32.8 years old when he was baptized in the summer or fall of AD 29. However, if the 15th year of Tiberius is counted from his co-regency, “about 30” means “29 to 31” years old. If Jesus was born in Dec. 5 BC or Jan. 4 BC, he was about 30.5 years old when he was baptized in the summer or fall of AD 26.

Maier says that when “about” (GR: ὥσει) is used with numbers or measures, it does not intend “mathematical precision, but rather an approximation to the nearest integral unit or round number.” For example, when Luke refers to the feeding of “about 5000 men . . . , no one would doubt that there could have been several dozens or hundreds more or less.”¹⁶⁴

[1 BC] “About” means “29 to 31”. If Jesus was born in Jan 2 BC and baptized in the fall of AD 29, he was about 30.8 when baptized. John would have been 31 when he started baptizing.

Martin says “When Luke discussed time periods, such as hours of the day, days of the week, or months, he *always* intended the exact time indication in which he had reference. . . . and his employment of the word ‘about’ can be read as a substitute for . . . lesser units of time.” For example, “about the sixth hour . . . there was darkness” does not mean between 4 and 8 hours, and Mary stayed with Elisabeth “about three months” does not mean between 1 and 5 months. “When Luke said ‘about five thousand men’ were fed, he does not mean

somewhere between three and seven thousand. He could, however, mean within hundreds or tens (which are lesser units) of the figure cited.”¹⁶⁵

[AD 1] “About” means “almost” 30. If Jesus was born in April 1 BC and baptized in the fall of AD 29, he was about 29.5 when baptized. John would have been 30 when he started baptizing.

Levites “thirty years old and upward” were to enter into the service of the Lord (Num 4:3, 23, 30). John the Baptist was a Levite like his father Zacharias. If Jesus was almost 30, John was 30 years old when he began his ministry since he was born about 6 months before Jesus.

Ministry of Jesus

After Jesus was baptized, he went into the wilderness where he was tempted. After returning, Jesus called his twelve disciples. In Cana, he told his mother “mine hour is not yet come” and then turned water into wine in a relatively private setting and manner. At the first Passover following his baptism, Jesus’ ministry became very public. He drove the money changers out of the temple. He said to the Jews, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” He also performed miracles and “many believed in his name.” (Jn 2:13–23)

46 Years to Build This Temple. After Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, the Jews said to him, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple.” (NIV/RSV John 2:20) The Jews in effect are saying this temple “has stood for forty-six years.” (§595)

“The rebuilding of the temple ... began in the spring of summer of 20 BC.”¹⁶⁶ According to Josephus, “the first part of Herod’s rebuilding the temple was the temple edifice which was done by the priests in one year and six months. Since the reconstruction began in 20/19 BC, the sanctuary would have been completed in 18/17 BC.”¹⁶⁷

1. **AD 27/28:** If the 1st year refers to the beginning of the temple (20/19 BC), 46 years later would be “the Passover of AD 27

- or AD 28.”¹⁶⁸ This interpretation provides support for those who believe Jesus was baptized in the fall of AD 26.
2. **AD 29/30:** If the 1st year refers to the completion of the temple proper (18/17 BC), “forty-six years later would bring the date to the year AD 29/30. This means, then that Jesus’ first Passover was the spring of 30.”¹⁶⁹ This provides support for those who believe Jesus was baptized in the fall of 29.

Duration of Ministry. Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention only one Passover when Christ was crucified. Therefore, the ministry of Jesus could have lasted as little as one year or less. (§597) Since all three gospels appear to refer to a springtime prior to that final Passover (Mt 12:1; Mk 2:23; Lk 6:1), the ministry would have been more than one year. (§598) According to John, there were two Passovers mentioned and one implied between Jesus’ baptism and crucifixion at the final Passover. (§601–3)

Table 17: Passovers between Baptism and Crucifixion

Matthew, Mark, Luke	John
One (< 1 year)	Three (2 years +)
Two (1 year +)	Four (3 years +)

The number of Passovers scholars use in their chronologies depends on when they think Jesus was baptized and buried.

11: Death and Burial of Jesus

The Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified during a Passover week when Pilate was governor (AD 26–36) and “Caiaphas was the high priest [AD 18–36] involved in the trial of Jesus.”¹⁷⁰

Passover and First Fruits

On **10 Nisan** (Mar/Apr), “a lamb was selected for a household.” On **14 Nisan**, the lamb was killed between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. before sunset. (The official Jewish day went from sunset to sunset.) That evening (**15 Nisan**), the Passover meal was eaten and the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread began. (¶605) Passover could be on any day of the week.

“On the day after the Sabbath” the priest would wave a sheaf of first fruits. Sadducees (Boethusians) believed “the day after the Sabbath” referred to Sunday, the day after the weekly Sabbath. However, Pharisees (rabbis) said that it referred to the day after the Passover (**16 Nisan**) even if it was the weekly Sabbath.¹⁷¹ When the Passover meal (15 Nisan) was on Friday night (the start of the Sabbath), the first fruits ceremony was on Sunday morning and 16 Nisan. This is when most scholars believe Jesus was resurrected.

Day of the Week Jesus Died

Friday Crucifixion. Most scholars believe that all four Gospels indicate the day of the crucifixion was Friday.

Jesus predicted that He would die and be raised on the third day (Mt 16:21; Mk 8:31; Lk 9:22). When one reads these events in the Gospels, one clearly receives the impression that Jesus rose on the third day. Jesus’ body was laid in the tomb on the evening of the day of preparation (Friday), the day before the Sabbath (Mt 27:62; 28:1; Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54, 56; Jn 19:31, 42). The women returned home and rested on the Sabbath (Saturday, Lk 23:56), Early on the first day of the week (Sunday), they went to the tomb (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1–2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1) which was empty. Furthermore, on the same day He arose from the grave, Jesus walked with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13), and they told Him that their Master was crucified and ‘now it is the third day since this occurred’ (Lk 24:21). This, then, points to His crucifixion as having occurred on Friday.¹⁷²

Resurrection on “the third day”. Scholars agree that Jesus was resurrected on the Jewish day that included Sunday morning. In the New Testament, 13 verses say that Jesus would be or was resurrected on “*the third day*”,¹⁷³ 11 verses say in or after “*three days*”,¹⁷⁴ and one verse says “the Son of man [shall] be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth” (Mt 12:40).

Most Bible scholars believe these phrases are equivalent. Jesus was buried Friday (1st day), in the grave on the Sabbath (2nd day), and was resurrected Sunday morning (the 3rd day). This was less than 48 hours. Although “the third day” is the most common phrase, the *one* reference to “three days and three nights” leads some to suggest a Wednesday (72 hours) or Thursday (49–72 hours) crucifixion. However, most scholars interpret “three days and three nights” as an idiom for “three days” and equivalent to “the third day” which is the most common phrase.

In the Bible, we see many examples of *inclusive* counting where part of a day counts as a full day.

1. Jesus said “I do cures today [1st day] and tomorrow [2nd day], and *the third day* I shall be perfected.” (Lk 13:32)
2. After Peter said “Thou art the Christ,” Jesus said the Son of man must “be killed, and *after three days* rise again.” (Mk 8:31) Reporting this same event, both Matthew and Luke say he would be raised “*the third day*.” (Mt 16:21; Lk 9:22)
3. The Pharisees told Pilate that Jesus said “*After three days*, I will rise again” and then asked that “the sepulchre be made sure *until the third day*” (Mt 27:63–64), not the fourth day.
4. When David came to Ziklag “on the *third day*”, he had not eaten for “*three days and three nights*.” (1 Sam 30:1, 12)
5. Esther said “fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink *three days, night or day*. ... *On the third day* ... Esther ... stood in the inner court of the king's house ...” (Esther 4:16; 5:1)
6. David’s men gave food and water to a man who “had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, *three days and three nights*.” The servant told David that his master had left him because he got sick *three days ago*. (1 Sam 30:12)

7. About the ninth hour (3 p.m.), an angel told Cornelius send men to Joppa, for Peter. “*On the morrow*” they went to Joppa. “*And on the morrow*” they returned with Peter. “*And the morrow after* they entered into Cæsarea. ... And Cornelius said, *Four days ago* I was fasting until this hour [3 p.m.]” (Acts 10:3-30). Four days ago refers to three nights and parts of four days.
8. Rehoboam told the people “Depart yet *for three days*, then come again to me. ... The people came ... the *third day*, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the *third day*.” (1 Kgs 12:5, 12)
9. “*From the morrow after the sabbath ... unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days.*” (Lev 23:15-16) This is like saying from Sunday to Sunday is eight days or from Sunday to the 7th Sunday is fifty days.
10. Israel and Syria camped near each other for “*seven days*” and “*in the seventh day* the battle was joined” (1 Kgs 20:29)
11. “He that is *eight days old* shall be circumcised ...” (Gen 17:12). “*In the eighth day* the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised” (Lev 12:3). According to the Talmud, “the operation must be performed on the *eighth day*, preferably early in the morning (YD 262:1).”¹⁷⁵ “Circumcision of Jewish boys occurs on the *eighth day*, counting the day of birth as day one; a son born on a Monday, for example, is circumcised on the following Monday.”¹⁷⁶ Obviously, if a boy is born sometime on Monday and circumcised on the following Monday morning, they are counting part of each Monday as a day.

“The expressions: ‘the three days and three nights,’ ‘after three days,’ and ‘on the third day’ are all one and the same time span. These all support the fact that Christ was crucified on Friday and was resurrected on Sunday.”¹⁷⁷

“Three days of darkness”. The Book of Mormon says Jesus “shall rise *the third day* from the dead” (Mosiah 3:10; D&C 20:23) and “after he is laid in a sepulchre *for the space of three days* he shall rise from the dead” (2 Ne 25:13). The sign of his death would be “three days of darkness” (1 Ne 19:10). “There

shall be no light upon the face of this land, even from the time that he shall suffer death, *for the space of three days*, to the time that he shall rise again from the dead” (Hel 14:20, 27). When Jesus died, “there arose a great storm ... [that] did last for about the space of *three hours*. ... *For the space of three days* ... there was no light seen” (3 Ne 8:5, 19, 23). “Thus did the *three days* pass away. And it was *in the morning*, and the darkness dispersed ..., and the earth did cease to tremble” (3 Ne 10:9).

One writer suggests the three “days” of darkness refers to three full days (sunrise to sunset). He assumes (a) the storm started at 12 PM when darkness began in Jerusalem (Mt 27:45), (b) the darkness began when Jesus died at 3 PM, and (c) the darkness ended when Jesus was resurrected just before sunrise. Therefore, Jesus was crucified on Thursday or there were only two full days (6 AM to 6 PM) of darkness in the New World.¹⁷⁸

Jesus taught “for the space of three days” (3 Ne 26:13) but was not present three full days (3 Ne 11:1; 19:3–11). We could assume (a) the storm started when Jesus died at 3 PM as did the quakes in Jerusalem (Mt 27:51), (b) the darkness began three hours later, and (c) the darkness dispersed and the quakes stopped “in the morning” of the last day (3 Ne 10:9). If part of a day counts as a day, a Thursday crucifixion would be four days of darkness and a Friday crucifixion would be three days of darkness. The tables below show both sets of assumptions.

Table 18: Jerusalem (Thursday crucifixion)

14-Thursday	15-Friday-Passover	16-Saturday-Sabbath	17-Sunday-Resurrection	18-Mon
6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3	6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3	6 9 N 3
← Jesus died		Resurrection on “the fourth day” →		
New World (Time about 9 hours behind time in Jerusalem)				
9 M 3	6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3	6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3
← Darkness begins		Darkness ends after 3 full days →		
← Darkness begins		Darkness ends “in the morning” of fourth day →		

Table 19: Jerusalem (Friday crucifixion)

14-Friday	15-Saturday-Passover & Sabbath	16-Sunday-Resurrection	17-Mon
6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3	6 9 N 3	6 9 M
← Jesus died		Resurrection on “the third day” →	
New World (Time about 9 hours behind time in Jerusalem)			
9 M 3	6 9 N 3	6 9 M 3	6 9 N 3
← Darkness begins		Darkness ends after 2 full days →	
← Darkness begins		Darkness ends “in the morning” of third day →	













Day of the Month Jesus Died


Although most scholars agree on Friday, some say it was on 14 Nisan (before Passover), while others say 15 Nisan (Passover). (§604) Their differences center on New Testament descriptions of the Last Supper.



Last Supper. According to Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Last Supper is presented as a Passover meal. If Jesus died the next day, Jesus was crucified on 15 Nisan, *after* the Passover meal. (§606) However, in John’s account, the Last Supper was a night before the Passover and the crucifixion was on 14 Nisan, *before* the Passover meal (§607–608). Was the Last Supper a Passover meal or a night before the Passover meal? Appendix A discusses attempts of scholars to answer this question.

Summary. Table 20 shows educated guesses regarding the day of the week and month when the crucifixion occurred.

Table 20: Crucifixion: Day of Week and Month

Jesus Died*	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun	
Friday-Matt	13-N	14-Nisan	15-Nisan	16-Sabbath	17-Nisan	
Last Supper was Passover			Ⓟ		1 st p	1 st S
			Ⓛ	†		
Friday-John	13-N	13-Nisan	14-Nisan	15-Sabbath	16-Nisan	
Last Supper was not Passover				Ⓟ		1 st PS
			Ⓛ	†		
Thursday	13-N	14-Nisan	15-Nisan	16-Sabbath	17-Nisan	
In tomb part of 3 days & 3 nights			Ⓟ		1 st p	1 st S
		Ⓛ	†			
Wednesday	14-N	15-Nisan	16-Nisan	17-Sabbath	18-Nisan	
In tomb a full 3 days & 3 nights		Ⓟ		1 st p		1 st S
	†					

* Ⓛ = Last Supper, Ⓟ = Passover, † = crucifixion,  = Sabbath worship,

 = lamb sacrificed between 3-5 p.m.,  = resurrection, 1st = First Fruits (P= Pharisees, S= Sadducees)

Friday (14 Nisan). Many scholars believe that the Last Supper was the night before the Passover as John indicates and that Jesus died on Friday afternoon (14 Nisan) at the same time the Passover lamb was killed. Jesus was buried on the day of “preparation” which refers to Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath and the Passover (Mt 27:62; Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:14). When John said “that sabbath day was an high day” (Jn 19:31), he referred to the weekly Sabbath which was “high” or “great” because it was also the Passover.¹⁷⁹ Jesus was resurrected on Sunday (16 Nisan) when the priest would wave the sheaf of first fruits according to both the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Friday (15 Nisan). Some scholars believe the Last Supper was a Passover meal as Matthew, Mark and Luke say. Therefore, Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon (15 Nisan), the day after the Passover lamb was killed. Jesus was buried on the day of “preparation” which refers to Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath. Jesus was resurrected on Sunday (17 Nisan) when the priest would wave the sheaf of first fruits according to the Sadducees, but not the Pharisees.

Thursday (14 Nisan). Jesus said, “the Son of man [shall] be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth” (Mt 12:40). Some scholars interpret this as meaning that Jesus would be in the grave *part* or *all* of *three days and three nights* (49–72 hours). John says “that sabbath day was an high day” (Jn 19:24). They say this refers to the Passover Sabbath and not the weekly Sabbath.¹⁸⁰ Jesus was buried on the day of “preparation” which refers to the day before the Passover Sabbath, not the weekly Sabbath.

If the Last Supper was the night before the official Passover meal (John), Jesus was crucified on **Thursday** afternoon (14 Nisan) at the same time the Passover lamb was killed and Jesus was in the grave part or all of three days and three nights.

Hoehner objects to the Thursday story because: (a) if it were not for the one “three days and three nights” reference, it is unlikely anyone would interpret the other evidence to support a Thursday crucifixion, (b) there is no evidence that Passover was a Sabbath and a “high” or “great” day if not on the weekly

Sabbath, and (c) “the day of preparation” normally refers to Friday, the day before the weekly Sabbath.¹⁸¹

Wednesday (14 Nisan). A few scholars interpret “*three days and three nights*” (Mt 12:40) to mean that Jesus would be in the grave *three full days and nights* (72 hours). Since this view has not been widely accepted, it will only be mentioned here. Hoehner reviews the reasoning for this view and critiques it.¹⁸²

Year Jesus Died

The Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified during a Passover week when Pilate was governor (AD 26–36) and “Caiaphas was the high priest [AD 18–36] involved in the trial of Jesus.”¹⁸³ The earliest year for Jesus’ baptism is AD 26 and the latest is AD 29. If Jesus was crucified one to four Passovers later, the earliest crucifixion year is AD 27 and the latest AD 34. (¶616)

Passover Dates. The official Jewish month began when the moon was first visible after the new moon. Thus, the 15th of each month was a full moon. Passover night is the 15th of Nisan during a full moon between March 21st and April 23rd.



“The Jewish month was a lunar month having no less than twenty-nine and no more than thirty days. The first day of the month was determined from the new moon. Of course, the new moon is not visible, but one or two days after the new moon, a faintly glowing moon sickle appears. When two trustworthy witnesses informed the priestly calendar commission, under oath, that they had seen the new moon, the day would be declared the first of the new month. When there was a problem of visibility, the commencement of the new month could not be postponed for more than a day.”¹⁸⁴ A “leap month” was added about once every 3 years when sanctioned by the calendar commission. The rabbis taught that a leap month was added when two of three conditions were met: (a) premature state of corn crops, (b) premature state of fruit trees, or (c) the lateness of the solstice (shortest day of the year). (¶78)

Fotheringham calculated astronomically the dates of 1 Nisan for AD 27–34 (¶616). Parker and Dubberstein¹⁸⁵ calculated the dates of 1 Nisan from their study of the Babylonian calendar where the addition of a leap month became standardized. We do not know if the Jews added a “leap month” when the Babylonians did. (¶71)

Table 21 shows the possible dates for 14 and 15 Nisan between AD 27 and 34. (¶620) The first dates in each column were calculated by Fotheringham. The second dates in a column assume (a) the moon was not visible until the next night, or (b) a “leap month” was inserted as in the Babylonian calendar and therefore Nisan would have occurred a month later. (¶620) The Julian dates given are from midnight to midnight even though the Jewish and Babylonian days began at the preceding sunset. Our Gregorian date would have been two days earlier during these years.

Table 21: Passover (AD 27–34)

Year	14 Nisan (Lamb killed)				15 Nisan (Passover meal)				
AD 27	Thu	Apr 10	or	Fri ^J Apr 11*	Fri ^M	Apr 11	or Sat	Apr 12*	
AD 28	Tue	Mar 30	or	Wed	Apr 28	Wed	Mar 31	or Thu	Apr 29
AD 29	Mon	Apr 18	or	Fri ^{**} Mar 18?	Tue	Apr 19	or Sat ^{**}	Mar 19?	
AD 30	Fri ^J	Apr 7			Sat	Apr 8			
AD 31	Tue	Mar 27	or	Wed	Apr 25	Wed	Mar 28	or Thu	Apr 26
AD 32	Mon	Apr 14			Tue	Apr 15			
AD 33	Fri ^J	Apr 3	or Sat	May 2	Sat	Apr 4	or Sun	May 3	
AD 34	Wed	Mar 24	or	Thu	Apr 22	Thu	Mar 25	or Fri ^M	Apr 23

* Some possibility depending on atmospheric conditions. (CKC,169)

** See discussion below.

Although the above dates are precise, “we do not know if the Jewish calendar was always in agreement, so we have to consider our results probable ... but not absolutely assured.” (¶616) For example, some scholars believe AD 29 is a possibility for the following reasons.

“By the early 1900s, AD 29 had come to be generally accepted as the year of Jesus’ death. 18 March AD 29 is reported in volume 3 of the well-known eleventh edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. ... But new developments around the turn of the century ... provided new impetus to astronomical

chronology. As a result, AD 29 was dismissed, the reason being astronomical. ... The argument against AD 29 will not be disputed. ... [However,] the assumption on which the argument is founded is not in the least binding.”¹⁸⁶

“According to respected Latin church authors [e.g., Tertullian (c. 160–240) and Hippolytus (c. 170–236)] dating from the second century AD onward, the year of Jesus’ death was that in which the two Gemini were roman consuls, AD 29 [However,] in AD 29, only two Fridays fell around full moon close to the spring equinox, 18 March and 15 April. ... In sum, AD 29 ‘cannot be forced into agreement with astronomy’ ... and is thereby ‘completely eliminated’ ... as the year of death of Jesus *if lunar months cannot begin before first crescent visibility*. ... The consul date must then be an ‘error.’”¹⁸⁷

“The sources do not tell us how lunar months began in Jerusalem in the first century AD.” Although Babylonian lunar months began when the first crescent was visible, Egyptian and Greek lunar months began before first crescent visibility. “A set of double dates in Aramaic papyri from Egypt dating to the fifth century BC ... equate an Egyptian civil date with a Jewish-Babylonian date. ... Fotheringham (1908, 1911) was the first to note ... that the lunar months of the double dates seem to *begin a little before first crescent visibility*. ... Additional double dates have since emerged in papyri published in 1953. ... These lunar months too *begin typically a little earlier than expected*.”¹⁸⁸

“Nowhere does the Talmud state precisely how months began. ... Handbooks on chronology assume that sanctification [of the New Moon] had a calendrical function, namely to identify day 1 of the month. But nowhere does the Talmud say this. To the contrary, Rosh Hashanah preserves a tradition by which Adar was always twenty-nine days long. ... Clearly in this case sanctification is not a calendrical act. ... If Adar is always twenty-nine days long, ... Nisan will therefore *on average* begin a little too early.”¹⁸⁹

“The modern Hebrew calendar is lunar, but the beginnings of the months are no longer determined every month by observing the moon. ... The months of the fixed lunar calendar begin on

average before first-crescent visibility. ... Modern Jewish lunar months begin on average earlier in relation to the spring equinox than Babylonian lunar months did. This may reflect an older practice. ... If one extends the fixed Jewish calendar ... backward into the past, 14 Nisan falls exactly on 18 March in AD 29.”¹⁹⁰

Likely Crucifixion Years. Table 22 shows likely years for the crucifixion depending on which day of the week and day of the month one accepts for the crucifixion.

Table 22: Likely Crucifixion Years by Day

Day of Week	Day of Month	Years (AD)
Friday	14 Nisan, before Passover	27, 29?, 30 or 33
Friday	15 Nisan, after Passover	27 or 34
Thursday	14 Nisan	27 or 34
Wednesday	14 Nisan	28, 31 or 34

R. E. Brown reports the opinions of 100 scholars regarding the year Jesus was crucified.

Table 23: Scholarly Opinions about Year of Crucifixion

27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
1-3%	1-3%	13%	53%	1-3%	1-3%	24%	1%

Most scholars reject AD 29 based on astronomical methods and assumptions for determining the start of the month and year. Also, “there has been a tendency to reject 33 as implying too old a Jesus and too long a ministry. ... In some ways the political situation in 33 ... would explain better Pilate’s vulnerability to the pressures of the populace. ... I see no possibility of coming to a decision choosing one of the two years,” i.e., AD 30 or 33.¹⁹¹

Scholars have given various reasons for choosing AD 29, 30 or 33. One major reason is that it fits with their interpretations of other pieces of evidence.

AD 29 is the preferred date for those who believe (a) Herod died in 4 BC, and (b) Jesus died at the 3rd Passover after his baptism in AD 26.

1. Jesus was born 25 Dec. 5 BC; baptized 6/10 Jan. AD 27; and crucified during Passover AD 29.¹⁹²
2. “The only [crucifixion] date ... which has any real claim to represent Christian tradition independent of the Gospels, is the year 29. ... AD 29 is the year, the 18th of March is the day, to which Christian tradition ... appears to point. Further, the Baptism was tentatively placed in AD 26–27; the length of the ministry was fixed, with some approach to certainty, at between two and three years.”¹⁹³

AD 30 is the preferred date for those who believe (a) Herod died in 4 BC, and (b) Jesus died at the 4th Passover after his baptism in AD 26.

1. Eusebius said that God “deferred their destruction [in AD 70] for forty years after their crimes against Christ.”¹⁹⁴
2. Clement of Alexandria gave the death date of Jesus, in the Egyptian calendar, as ‘Pharmouthi 25.’ This is Friday, 14 Nisan, in AD 30.¹⁹⁵
3. The 15th year of Tiberius (AD 26) must be counted from his co-regency to allow 3 or 4 Passovers after Jesus is baptized as John implies. Otherwise, only 1 or 2 Passovers are possible (Matthew, Mark, Luke).
4. If Jesus was born in January of 4 or 5 BC, he would have been 29.8 or 30.8 years old in AD 26 when John baptized him. Thus, Jesus was “about 30” (i.e., 29–31) as Luke states (Lk 3:23).

AD 33 is the preferred date for those who believe (a) Herod died in 1 BC or AD 1, and (b) Jesus died at the 4th Passover after his baptism in AD 29.

1. The 15th year of Tiberius can be interpreted “in its proper Roman setting and sense” without “resorting to an unlikely ‘co-regency’ dating system” or having less than 3 Passovers between the baptism and crucifixion of Jesus.¹⁹⁶
2. The apocryphal “Acts of Pilate” places the trial of Jesus before Pilate in the 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad (AD 32/33) during the 19th year of Tiberius.¹⁹⁷

3. AD 33 “is the only date which accounts for Pilate’s attitude on Good Friday and makes sense of the prosecution’s threat in John 19:12.”¹⁹⁸
4. Peter quotes Joel (Acts 2:14–21) saying, “The sun will be turned to darkness and the *moon to blood* before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come.” Some commentators think Peter is claiming this prophecy had recently been fulfilled. There were three hours of darkness at the crucifixion which may have been caused by a dust storm or earthquake. There are reports that the “moon turned to blood.” This phrase has been used since 300 BC to describe lunar eclipses. On 3 April AD 33, the partial lunar eclipse “was visible from Jerusalem at moonrise.” The moon appears red during a total lunar eclipse and some partial eclipses. Dust suspended in the atmosphere after a dust storm would also affect the color. “The majority of lunar eclipses pass unnoticed, occurring when people are asleep or indoors. This eclipse however would probably have been seen by most of the population of Israel.”¹⁹⁹ “Maier cites the earthquake and eclipse reported by Phlegon, and Eusebius’ dating the death of Jesus in the 19th year of Tiberius, both of which can be calculated as evidence for AD 33.”²⁰⁰
 - a. Phlegon, a Greek writing c. AD 137, “reported that in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad there was ‘the greatest eclipse of the sun’ and that ‘it became night in the sixth hour of the day [i.e., noon] so that the stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea.’ An eclipse, of course, was impossible at that time, but how intriguing that Year 4 of the 202nd Olympiad should be AD 33.”²⁰¹
 - b. “In one version of his *Chronicon*, Eusebius supports a AD 33 dating in stating that Jesus suffered ‘in the nineteenth year of the reign of Tiberius,’ which he further qualifies by citing a reference from Phlegon.” [see above].²⁰²

Part IV: BOOK OF MORMON

Several Book of Mormon prophecies and statements relate to the birth and death of Jesus. LDS scholars interpret and use them in different ways as they relate to Bible descriptions of these events.

12: Jesus Died in the 34th Year

According to the Book of Mormon, Jesus died “*in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month ...*” (3 Ne 8:5).

Birth

Samuel’s Prophecy. In the 86th year of the reign of the judges, Samuel the Lamanite said, “I give unto you a sign; for *five years* more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God. ... There shall be one day and a night and a day, as if it were one day and there were no night; ... and it shall be *the night before he is born*” (Hel. 13:1–2; 14:2–4). The end of the 91st year was the end of the fifth year after the year of the prophecy.

Sign. “In the commencement of the [92nd] *year*, ... there began to be greater signs. ... But there were some who began to say that *the time was past*. ... Now ... there was a day set apart by the unbelievers, that all ... [the believers] should be put to death except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet.” When the prophet Nephi prayed, “the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying: on *this night* shall the sign be given, and on *the morrow* come I into the world.” That night the sign was given and “it was as light as though it was mid-day.” (3 Ne 1:4–5, 9, 12–13, 19)

Calendar. After analyzing Book of Mormon wars and Mesoamerican weather patterns, Sorenson said, “With overwhelming probability, the Nephite calendar system used to

report their wars in the first century BC placed their new year day at or very near the winter solstice” [Dec 22].²⁰³ If Jesus was born in April, the sign was given over three months after the start of the year. This explains phrases like “began to” that suggest a significant amount of time was passing after the new year. No wonder some “began to say that the time was past.”

Calendar Change

After the 100th year had passed away, “*nine years* had passed away from the time when the sign was given. ... Now the Nephites began to reckon their time *from this period when the sign was given*, or from the coming of Christ; therefore, nine years had passed away” and the 10th year of the new calendar began (3 Ne 2:4–8, 10). In the LDS footnotes, the date, AD 10, corresponds to the 10th year during which Jesus was nine years old until the end of that year when he turned 10.

Crucifixion-Resurrection

Prophecies. The Book of Mormon contains several prophecies of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

1. Zenos said, “*three days* of darkness” would be a sign of the death of Jesus. (1 Ne 19:10)
2. Nephi said, “they will crucify him; and after he is laid in a sepulchre for the space of *three days* he shall rise from the dead ...” (2 Ne 25:13)
3. Mosiah said, “he shall rise the *third day* from the dead ...” (Mosiah 3:10)
4. Samuel the Lamanite said, “in that day that [Jesus] shall suffer death the sun shall be darkened ... and also the moon and the stars; and there shall be no light upon the face of this land, even *from the time that he shall suffer death*, for the space of *three days*, to the time that *he shall rise again* from the dead” (Hel 14:20).

Jesus died on 1/4/34. Apparently, Samuel also said the sign would occur 33 Nephite-years after Jesus’ birth, because after the 33rd year had passed away, “the people *began to look* with great earnestness for the sign which had been given by the

prophet Samuel ... And ... *in the thirty and fourth year, in the first month, on the fourth day of the month*, there arose a great storm, such an one as never had been known in all the land.” (3 Ne 8:3,5)

The crucifixion occurred on 14 Nisan (Mar/Apr) in Jerusalem about the time of a full moon. If the Nephites had been using a lunar calendar at this time, the sign also would have been seen about the 14th of their month but about 8–9 hours earlier in the day because of a difference in time zones.

When did the ‘Nephite-year’ begin?

Nine years after the sign of Jesus’ birth, “the Nephites began to reckon their time *from this period when the sign was given ...*” (3 Ne 2:4–8). Since the crucifixion occurred at Passover (about April) on 1/4/34, possible interpretations include:

1. The start of the Nephite-year began *on the day of the sign*.²⁰⁴ According to Sorenson, the Nephite new year moved from December to April since the crucifixion occurred at the start of the 1st month.²⁰⁵ If the Nephite-year began on the day of the sign, then Jesus was 33 ‘Nephite-years’ old and 3 days when he was crucified during Passover. If Jesus was born on April 6th, he was also born on or within a few weeks of Passover. This suggests that the average length of a ‘Nephite-year’ was about the same as a Jewish-year unless we assume 33 ‘Nephite-years’ equals another whole number of Jewish-years (e.g., 32 or 34).
2. The year of the sign became the 1st Nephite-year while the *start of the year did not change*.²⁰⁶ This suggests that (a) the Nephite-year already began about April since the crucifixion occurred at Passover on the 4th day of the 1st Nephite month, (b) Jesus was born up to 12 months later and would have been less than 33 Nephite-years old when he died, or (c) the Nephite-year was very different from the Jewish-year.
3. The start of the year *gradually moved* from some date (e.g., Dec. 22) to April in 33 Nephite-years because the Nephite-year was shorter or longer than the Jewish-year (365-days). To move forward three months in 33 years, the Nephite-year would have to average about 368-days. To move back nine

months, the Nephite-year would have to average about 357-days. Neither of these options comes close to a likely year length.

The above comments indicate Jesus was no more than 33 Nephite-years old. Jesus was born in the 92nd year of the reign of the judges. At the end of the 100th year, “nine years had passed away from the time when the sign was given” and the 10th year began (3 Ne 1:4; 2:4–10). A baby’s first birthday marks the *end* of his first year and the *start* of his second year. Therefore, if the Nephites started their new calendar on the day Jesus was born, the start of the 34th “Nephite-year” would be shortly after Jesus’ 33rd birthday, not his 34th birthday. If one used *inclusive* counting, the four days of the 34th year would count as a year and one would say Jesus lived 34 years, but he was only 33 years old.

How long was a ‘Nephite-year’?

The Nephite “record gives us insufficient information to permit us to describe their calendar with confidence. We can only make certain observations about it and then *draw sensible inferences* about the remaining features. We cannot clarify the matter by citing potential Near Eastern precedents, for the Book of Mormon gives us no information about the calendrical knowledge possessed by Lehi’s pioneering group. In any case, the assumption of a single calendar might be misleading. Based on how peoples at the Nephite’s level of civilization tracked time, I would be surprised if the Nephites had not followed more than one system, perhaps one for ritual, another for agriculture, and at least one other for their political and historical annals.”²⁰⁷

Likely Lengths of a Year. “Whatever knowledge of the calendar Lehi and Nephi brought with them is suggested, or at least limited, by what historical sources tell us of the pre-exilic Israelite calendars.”²⁰⁸ The first five calendars listed below were (a) used in Israel, Egypt, or Babylonia before Lehi left Jerusalem (see Appendix A), or (b) used by Mayans and Aztecs

in Central America where the Nephites probably lived. The last two were used in the Middle East after Lehi left Jerusalem.

1. **354-day Lunar Calendar.** A year is 354-days and consists of 12 moons or months that are each about 29.5 days long. Because this is 11 days too short, 33 of these lunar-years equals 32 of our years.
2. **365.25-day Lunar Calendar.** About every 3 years, an extra month was added to catch up to a star position, a solar equinox/solstice, or a related event. This averages about 365.25-days a year and ranges from 364 to 366 days over a period of five or more years. The Egyptians used a lunar or ‘natural’ calendar like this. (§39) About 800 BC, the Babylonians started adding 7 lunar months every 19 years. After Jewish leaders returned from captivity in Babylon (c. 537–432 BC), the official Jewish calendar became similar to the Babylonian calendar except for when a month was added.
3. **360-day Calendar.** In the middle-east, this consisted of twelve 30-day-months. The Mayan ‘*tun-year*’ consisted of eighteen 20-day-months.²⁰⁹
4. **364-day Enoch Calendar.** This consisted of twelve 30-day months plus one day was added after the 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th months. Thus, there were 13 weeks in every quarter and 52 weeks in a year. Passover and other festivals would always be on the same day of the week every year. If a ‘leap’ week was added every seven years, an Enoch-year would average 365-days. If an additional week was added every 28 years, a year would average 365.25-days.²¹⁰
5. **365-day Calendar.** Every four years, this calendar would be one day behind our calendar. An Egyptian-*civil-year* (c. 2900 BC) consisted of twelve 30-day months plus 5 extra days (§40). About 2500 BC, the Egyptians also started using a 365-day *lunar* calendar for religious purposes (§41). A calendar like the Egyptian-civil calendar was used in Mesopotamia (§57). The Phoenician solar calendar consisted of twelve 30-day months plus five additional days at the end of the year. “Solomon borrowed the Phoenician solar calendar and made it the official calendar throughout his empire.”²¹¹ The

Mayan ‘haab-year’ consisted of eighteen 20-day months plus five ‘unlucky’ or ‘useless’ days.²¹² Jomard noticed some striking similarities between the 365-day calendars of ancient Egypt and Mexico.²¹³ The ancient Canaanite ‘pentecontad’ calendar consisted of seven 50-day periods plus 15 festival days²¹⁴ or seven 49-day periods plus 22 festival days²¹⁵.

6. **365.25-day Calendar.** In 45 BC, the Julian calendar moved the start of the new year from Mar. 1 to Jan. 1 and added an extra day every fourth year called “leap year.” The Julian-year was 365.25 days which was 11 minutes too long. This amounts to about 9 extra days in 1,200 years (¶143–145) Some believe the Phoenician calendar may have added an extra day based on the autumnal equinox.²¹⁶
7. **365.2425-day Calendar.** In AD 1582, our current Gregorian calendar dropped 10 days and started skipping a leap year every 400 years. The Gregorian-year averages 365.2425-days. (¶145)

Length of a Nephite-Year. Table 24 shows the average length of a Nephite-year if Jesus was born in December or January and died 33 Nephite-years later at Passover (Mar/Apr). The ages represent those in popular non-LDS chronologies. This same table applies to the possibility that the Nephite-year began in December when Jesus was born and gradually moved to Passover during 33 Nephite-years.

Table 24: Nephite-Year if Jesus was born in Dec/Jan

Age	Nephite-year*
36.3	401.78
35.3	390.71
34.3	379.64
33.3	368.57
32.3	357.50
31.3	346.43

* A ‘Nephite-year’ = age * 365.25 ÷ 33 years.

None of these lengths is close to any likely length. Any age greater than 33 would require the average Nephite-year to be longer than 365.25 ± 1 days, but the likely years are not longer. Therefore, unless the Nephite-year was very different, Jesus

was not born in Dec./Jan. and the Nephite new year did not gradually move from Dec. to Passover during 33 Nephite-years.

Table 25 shows the average length of a Nephite-year if Jesus was born in April, nine months earlier, and died 33 Nephite-years later at Passover (Mar/Apr).

Table 25: Nephite-Year if Jesus was born in April

Age	Nephite-year*
37.0	409.52
36.0	398.45
35.0	387.39
34.0	376.32
33.0	365.25
32.0	354.18

* A 'Nephite-year' = age * 365.25 ÷ 33 years.

Only the last two come close to any of the likely year lengths. Age 32 matches a simple lunar calendar of 354 days. Age 33 matches a calendar of either 365-days or 365.25 days. This suggests that the Nephite-year began on or near the day Jesus was born or that the Nephite-year already began around Passover when Jesus was born. However, Sorenson’s analysis of Nephite wars indicates the Nephite-year began in December prior to the birth of Jesus and consisted of twelve 30-day months plus five extra days.²¹⁷ Therefore, the discussion and tables that follow assume that the Nephite-year began on the day Jesus was born.

Subtracting 33 Nephite-Years. Elder Orson Pratt suggested taking the likely crucifixion dates and subtracting 33 Nephite-years plus 3 days to compute the possible birthdates of Jesus. Elder Pratt assumed AD 30 was the crucifixion year because it was “acknowledged by the greater portion of the learned men of the day.” Elder Pratt also assumed a 365-day year based on what Spanish historians at the time of Columbus said about the Mexican calendar.²¹⁸ Lefgren assumed AD 33 was the crucifixion and also assumed a 365-day year based on the Egyptian civil calendar and a Maya calendar.²¹⁹ From the time of their captivity in Egypt, ancient Israelites lived with or near

people who used either the 365-day Egyptian civil calendar or the 365-day Canaanite calendar. (See appendix A.)

Table 26 shows when Jesus would have been born if we subtract common year lengths from the AD 29, 30 and 33 crucifixion dates. Most scholars accept only AD 30 or 33.

Table 26: Jesus' Birth Date by Subtracting Year Lengths

Year	16 Mar AD 29*	5 Apr AD 30	1 Apr AD 33
354	W 8 Mar 4 BC (26 ADR2)	W 8 Apr 3 BC (26 NIS)	W 4 Apr 1 BC (24 NIS)
360	M 2 Sep 5 BC (3 TIS)	M 22 Sept 4 BC (4 TIS)	M 18 Sep 1 BC (4 TIS)
365	Th 21 Mar 5 BC (15 NIS)	Th 10 Apr 4 BC (15 NIS)	Th 6 Apr 1 BC (15 NIS)
365.25	Tu 12 Mar 5 BC (7 NIS)	W 2 Apr 4 BC (7 NIS)	W 29 Mar 1 BC (7 NIS)

* Gregorian birthday = Death date – (year len * 33) + 3 days. This assumes the Nephite-year began when the sign was given. Calculations are based on a calendar conversion program at www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/.

For AD 30 and 33, the likely year lengths put Jesus' birth at most a week before the traditional 5/4 BC death of Herod. Only a 365-day year results in a birth date on April 6th (in 1 BC).

Nephite-Year If Born April 6th. Some LDS scholars believe Jesus was born on April 6th but not in 1 BC. If we assume Jesus was born on April 6th and died at Passover in AD 30 or 33, we can compute the average length of a Nephite-year. Calendar conversion programs provide the Julian date for each of the Gregorian dates shown. By subtracting a Julian birth date from a crucifixion date, we know the number of days Jesus would have lived. Since Jesus was 33 Nephite-years old plus three days when he died, we can compute the corresponding average length of the Nephite-year. In Table 27, unlikely year lengths are shaded.

Table 27: Nephite-Year If Jesus Was Born April 6

Birthday	16 Mar AD 29*	5 Apr AD 30	1 Apr AD 33
6 Apr 5 BC	364.52**	376.18	409.27
6 Apr 4 BC	353.45	365.12	398.21
6 Apr 3 BC	342.39	354.06	387.15
6 Apr 2 BC	331.33	343.00	376.09
6 Apr 1 BC	320.24	331.91	365.00

* Gregorian dates (www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar)

** Length of Nephite-year = (death – birth – 3 days) / 33 years. This assumes the Nephite-year started when the sign was given.

Only 5, 4, 3, and 1 BC come close to likely year lengths. Only 1 BC, matches exactly one of the likely year lengths.

Summary. The calculations in this section indicate that the Nephite historians probably used a 365-day calendar. Although a 354-day lunar calendar is possible, Jesus would have been only 32 when he died which is less than most scholars believe. If Jesus died during Passover in AD 30 or 33 as most scholars accept, Jesus would have been born close to Passover which was probably on 6 Apr. 1 BC or 10 Apr. 4 BC. If Jesus was born on 6 Apr. 1 BC, he was born on Passover day and died on 1 Apr. AD 33 a few hours before the Passover meal and exactly 33 Nephite-years plus 3 days later. An *Ensign* article discussed how the symbolism of Passover related to the birth as well as the death of Jesus.²²⁰

[4 BC] LDS scholars who believe Herod died in 5/4 BC say that Herod's death in 4 BC is "certain," "firmly established," or "proven beyond a doubt." Therefore, D&C 20:1 referring to April 6, 1830 cannot be taken literally. Perhaps, Jesus was born on April 6th but certainly not in 1 BC. Also, the Book of Mormon statement that Jesus died at the start of the 34th year, (a) must indicate that Jesus did not die in AD 30 or 33, (b) must be interpreted loosely, or (c) must be ignored because we can't know for sure how the Nephite calendar relates to the Jewish calendar.

Spackman assumed Jesus was born during Passover 5 BC (14 Nisan or 21 March) and added 33 Nephite-years (365-days) plus 3 days. This would mean that Jesus died on 16 March AD 29 which is a month earlier than the accepted Passover date for that year. He then argued that this date was Friday 14 Nisan (Passover) because the Jewish Calendar Council:

1. did not add an extra month since it was a 'Sabbatical year' according to Wacholder,
2. limited the previous month, Adar, to only 29 days since Nisan must have 30 days, and

3. put 14 Nisan on Friday before the Sabbath “for the convenience of Passover pilgrims, profit” and to avoid conflict with Jesus and his disciples.²²¹

Huber assumed Jesus died in AD 30 and subtracted 33 Nephite-years (365-days). This would mean that Jesus was born 11 April 4 BC. He then argued that Herod died after the 4 BC eclipse and before the Passover of 3 BC a year later. Therefore, “Herod’s sons dated their reigns from the reading of Herod’s testament rather than from Caesar’s confirmation” a year later.²²² However, that “in view of the serious deterioration in Herod’s health which Josephus says set in immediately after the eclipse, it does not seem likely that he could have lived much longer than” two weeks.²²³ Also, “Herod’s principal successor, Archelaus ... [was] eager to sail to Rome ... [for the] ratification of his own kingship.” It is improbable that he would have waited more than a few months.²²⁴

Sorenson⁸⁵ assumed Herod died in 4 or 5 BC. Sorenson⁹⁰ assumed a 360-day or 365-day year. He also assumed the Nephites probably added five extra days at the end of the last of twelve 30-day months which would make it a 365-day year.²²⁵ He also considered 7/5 Apr. AD 30 or 3/1 Apr. AD 33 to be “the only legitimate possibilities” for the crucifixion.²²⁶ However, he didn’t indicate what this means for the birth of Jesus which didn’t fit his earlier assumption that Herod died in 4 or 5 BC.²²⁷

According to Wayment and Holzaphfel, Jesus lived 34 years (not 33) which would fit well with a 5 BC birth date and an AD 30 death.

“The date of Herod’s reign has been firmly established by scholars, and both Josephus and Roman sources agree that he was proclaimed king of Judea in Rome in 40 BC and that he died in 4 BC. ... Jesus must have been *born in the spring or winter of 5 BC*. ... Two likely dates emerge as possibilities for the date of the crucifixion, April 7, 30 and April 3, 33. ... If April 33 is accepted, then Jesus must have been about thirty-seven years old when he died. ... The evidence provided by the Book of Mormon reveals that the time period between the sign of Jesus’ birth and the signs of His death was *thirty-four* years (thirty-three if counted inclusively). Unfortunately, *we do not know* whether the Book of Mormon peoples used a *solar calendar or exactly how their years correspond to our Julian calendar*. We do know that in either method of

calculation, lunar or solar, a period of thirty-seven years can be ruled out. The most likely date for the death of the Savior is *AD April 7, 30.*"²²⁸

"The challenge facing any reconstruction of Jesus' life, the duration of which, according to the Book of Mormon, lasted *almost exactly 34 years* (3 Ne 1:1, 21; 8:2–5), is allowing sufficient time prior to Herod's death for the early events of Jesus' life to have taken place while at the same time having a death date of Friday on the day before Passover (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) or the day of Passover (John). With the Book of Mormon evidence we have, and assuming no adjustments need to be made for the differences between a lunar and solar calendar, we can calculate that Jesus probably died on or around his *thirty-fourth birthday*. However, such a simple conclusion overlooks the *complexities of and differences among ancient calendars* and the variety of methods of intercalation [or adding leap days]. Therefore, the surviving data can determine only that Jesus must have been born prior to the death of Herod, most likely between the *spring and midwinter of 5 BC.*"²²⁹

Brown, Griggs, and Hansen argued that we cannot use book of Mormon dates because do not know what calendar the Nephites used.

"An article by Professor Timothy D. Barnes ... *proves beyond a doubt* that the Passover which followed Herod's death was the Passover of 4 BC. ... Josephus's statement that Herod was made king thirty-seven years before his death places his demise in 4 BC. ... It is *absolutely impossible* ... that Josephus's reference can be taken in any other way. ... Using Book of Mormon chronology to measure the length of Jesus' life, especially in terms of Old World calendar systems, must fail simply because *we do not know what calendrical arrangements were employed by the Nephites*. There exists some evidence that the people of Zarahemla and possibly the Jaredites used a lunar calendar. ... But whether the Nephites themselves employed a lunar or solar calendar at the time of Jesus' birth is a question for which the Book of Mormon provides no clear answer."²³⁰

[AD 1] LDS scholars who believe Herod died in AD 1 say that Jesus lived no more than 33 Nephite-years and that sensible inferences can be made regarding the length of a Nephite-year. When 33 Nephite-years is subtracted from the two most likely crucifixion dates, Jesus would have been born during or after the 4 BC Passover. This indicates that Herod died after the traditional 4 BC Passover not before as most non-LDS scholars believe. The interpretations of evidence supporting 4 BC for

Herod's death have been questioned and reasonable alternative interpretations have been proposed.

13: Lehi's 600-Year Prophecy

Prophecy and Fulfillment

Lehi prophesied that “six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem, a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah, or . . . a Savior of the world” (1 Ne 10:4). Nephi said “according to the *words of the angel*” (1 Ne 19:8) and “according to the *words of the prophets*, the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem” (2 Ne 25:19).

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the sign of Jesus’ birth was given “six hundred years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem” (3 Ne 1:1, 15). This fulfilled Lehi’s prophecy.

When did Lehi Leave Jerusalem?

“In the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, . . . there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed” (1 Ne 1:4). After seeing a vision, Lehi “began to prophesy” concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (1 Ne 1:18–19). Nephi does not say if it was months or years later that Lehi was warned in a dream to leave Jerusalem (1 Ne 2:1–3). In his preface to third Nephi, Mormon writes, “Lehi . . . came out of Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, the king of Judah” (3 Ne Preface). However, if this statement is based on Nephi’s statements quoted here, Mormon may have only assumed Lehi left the first year.

Problem

According to scholars, Zedekiah was king of Judah from 597 to 586 BC (¶441–2) and Jesus was born between 5 and 1 BC as discussed previously. Therefore, if Lehi left Jerusalem in April 597 BC when Zedekiah became king and Jesus was born in 1 BC, then only 596 Jewish-years had passed. If Lehi left in 597 BC and Jesus was born in 5 BC, only 592 years had passed.

Proposed Solutions

LDS scholars have proposed several solutions to explain how the 600 ‘Nephite-years’ relate to 596 or fewer Jewish-years used in the Bible.

1. Scholars are wrong. Zedekiah really began his reign between 605 and 600 BC.
2. Although Zedekiah reigned from 597 to 586 BC, ‘Nephite-years’ were shorter than Jewish-years.
3. Lehi left Jerusalem *before* Zedekiah became king in 597 BC.

Each of these options will now be discussed.

Scholars are wrong

Some LDS scholars say that Zedekiah began his reign earlier than scholars believe.

1. “Traditionally, the beginning of [Zedekiah’s] reign is recorded as 597 BC. ... Nonetheless, the Book of Mormon is evidence that Zedekiah’s reign began at least by the year 600 BC.”²³¹
2. “The exact date of Zedekiah’s ascension to the throne is not mentioned in the Bible, although nearly all of the scholars agree it must have been within a few years of 600 BC. The Book of Mormon seems to indicate that the year 600 BC is correct for the departure of Lehi from Jerusalem.”²³²
3. “Lehi ... led the Nephite people out of Jerusalem in or about the year 601 BC. ... According to most historians,” Zedekiah became king “in the year 597 BC, but it is clear from certain statements made in the Book of Mormon (see 1 Ne 19:8) that the date must have been 601 BC.”²³³

Shorter Nephite-Years

Some LDS scholars believe Nephite-years were different than Jewish-years. Table 28 shows the year Lehi would have left Jerusalem based on likely birth years and likely year lengths discussed in the last chapter. The shaded years are outside of the years scholars believe Zedekiah reigned as king of Judah.

Table 28: When Lehi Left by Subtracting Year Lengths

Year	If Jesus was Born in April				
	5 BC *	4 BC	3 BC	2 BC	1 BC
354-days	587 BC	586 BC	585 BC	584 BC	583 BC
360-days	597 BC	596 BC	595 BC	594 BC	593 BC
365-days	605 BC	604 BC	603 BC	602 BC	601 BC
365.25-days	605 BC	604 BC	603 BC	602 BC	601 BC

* Calculations are based on a calendar conversion program at www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/.

“The suggestion has been made that the ‘calendar’ used by the Nephites to count Lehi’s 600 years of prophecy actually may have been a combination of calendars, such as a lunar calendar followed at some point by a 360-day calendar, or a 360-day calendar followed by a 365-day calendar.”²³⁴

Huber prefers a 360-day year with Lehi leaving in the first year of Zedekiah (597 BC) and Jesus being born April 11, 4 BC. From birth to crucifixion, he prefers a 365-day year with Jesus dying 33 years later on April 7, AD 30.²³⁵

Sorenson⁸⁵ prefers a 360-day Mayan *tun* year with Lehi leaving in the first year of Zedekiah (597/596 BC) and Jesus being born in 5 BC or 4 BC.²³⁶ However, in his later work, Sorenson⁹⁰ assumes (a) Lehi used a 360-day or a 365-day calendar during the 120 years before the death of Jesus, and (b) the Nephites probably added five extra days at the end of the last of twelve 30-day months which would make it a 365-day year.²³⁷ He also said that during this period the Nephite new year was “at or very near the winter solstice” on Dec. 22nd.²³⁸ However, it is unclear how their new year would remain fixed on or near Dec. 22nd if they used a 360-day year from the time of Zedekiah to the birth of Jesus. If a 365-day year was used during the 87 years before Jesus was born, the new year would have moved back 22 days (e.g., from Dec. 22nd to Dec. 1st). A 360-day year would have moved back 457 days (1.25 years) during that same period. If a 360-day year had been used for the 33 Nephite-years from the birth to the death of Jesus, Jesus would have lived only 32.5 years. Thus, it seems unlikely that the Nephites used a 360-day calendar during the 87 years preceding the birth of Jesus.

Spackman does not believe Lehi left Jerusalem in the first year of Zedekiah because: (a) Nephi knew that Jeremiah had been put in prison (1 Ne 7:14) which occurred in 589/588 BC, and (b) Nephi said Jerusalem would be destroyed “immediately after my father left Jerusalem” (2 Ne 25:10) which did not occur until 587/586 BC. Because scholars say Zedekiah reigned from 597–586 BC and Herod died in 5/4 BC, Spackman prefers 354-day years with Lehi leaving Jerusalem near the end of Zedekiah’s reign about 587 BC and Jesus being born in 5 BC. According to Spackman, his calendar also accounts for Sorenson’s analysis of the seasons of war. For Spackman, the Nephite-year was 354-days from the time Lehi left Jerusalem until the birth of Jesus and 365-days from the birth of Jesus to his death.²³⁹

Sorenson⁹³ found “Spackman's arguments generally persuasive. They should be considered to supersede any statements on the Nephite calendar I have made. ... Spackman's date of February 25 for the new year's day reported in Alma 52:1 [69 BC] is reasonable, as I now understand natural conditions in both contemporary Middle America and Book of Mormon lands. On the contrary, my earlier proposal for a date around the winter solstice now seems too early. The correlation between the Nephite months and our current months which I proposed in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* thus needs to be revised by about two months.”²⁴⁰

Lehi left before Zedekiah

Some LDS scholars subtract 600 years from when they believe Jesus was born without explaining how their conclusion relates to verses about Zedekiah. “If ... our Lord was born four years before the beginning of our era, the exodus of Lehi from Jerusalem would have taken place in ... the year 604 BC, or the year after the battle of Carchemish.”²⁴¹

Other LDS scholars believe Book of Mormon and historical evidence indicates that Lehi left Jerusalem *before* Zedekiah became king in 597 BC.

Just before Zedekiah became king, Nebuchadnezzar “carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the *mighty men of valor*, even *ten thousand* captives, and all the *craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people* of the land. And he carried away [king] Jehoiachin to Babylon, ... and his officers, and the *mighty of the land* ... And all the *men of might* ... [and] all that were *strong and apt for war*.” (2 Kgs 24:14-16)

If Lehi and his family had still been in Jerusalem at this time, Lehi, his sons, and Laban would have been taken captive to Babylon for the following reasons.²⁴²

1. Lehi was not “the poorest sort.” When he left Jerusalem, he left his gold, silver, and precious things behind. His property was “exceedingly great.” (1 Ne 2 1–3, 9; 3:22–5)
2. Laman, Lemuel, and Nephi were probably “strong and apt for war.”
3. Nephi appears to have been a “craftsman and smith.” He made “many swords” and taught the people “to build buildings, and to work in all manner of wood, ... iron, ... copper, ... brass, ... steel, ... gold, ... silver, and of precious ores ...” (2 Ne 5:14–15). He also made the small plates (1 Ne 9:3).
4. Laban was a “mighty man” who could “command fifty” (1 Ne 3:30). He had a sword of steel with a hilt of gold (1 Ne 4:8). He also had a servant and a “treasury” where he kept the brass plates (1 Ne 4:20).

In a vision, Lehi saw that Jerusalem “should be destroyed ... and *many* should be carried away captive into Babylon” (1 Ne 1:13). “How could Lehi prophesy that ‘many’ would be taken captive after the beginning of Zedekiah’s reign [in 597 BC], that is, *after the deportation of ‘all Jerusalem’ had already occurred?*”²⁴³ After eight years in the wilderness, Nephi said that the people of Jerusalem “must be destroyed, *save a few* only, who shall be led away into captivity” (1 Ne 17:22, 43). When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem ten years later in 587 BC, only about 800 people were taken captive (¶444). Lehi’s prophecy of “many” captives appears to fit events *before* Zedekiah became king and Nephi’s prophecy of “few” captives

eight years later fits events at the end of Zedekiah's reign. If Lehi left Jerusalem *before* Zedekiah became king in 597 BC, his prophecy could refer to an earlier destruction of Jerusalem and to the many captives taken in 597 BC when Zedekiah became king.²⁴⁴

“Because of such considerations, it has been proposed that *the king whom Nephi called ‘Zedekiah’ must have been Jehoiakim.*”²⁴⁵

King Jehoiakim. After the death of king Josiah (609 BC), the people made his son Jehoahaz king and he reigned three months. Nechoh, king or pharaoh of Egypt, deposed Jehoahaz, made Eliakim king, changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim, and collected tribute. (2 Kgs 23:30–35) “The change of the name was to show Nechoh's *supremacy, and that Jehoiakim was only his vassal or viceroy.*”²⁴⁶ This new name is sometimes called a throne, royal, regnal, or coronation name.²⁴⁷

“In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim” the Lord sent prophets like Jeremiah and Urijah to prophesy that Jerusalem would be “desolate without inhabitant” and the people would become servants of Nebuchadnezzar. The priests said Jeremiah was “worthy to die” for prophesying against Jerusalem. Although Jeremiah was spared, Jehoiakim killed Urijah for prophesying against Jerusalem. (Jer 26–27) Jeremiah said “I am in derision daily, every one *mocketh* me.” (Jer 20:7) After all, Jerusalem was a stronghold and even the Assyrians had been unable to conquer Jerusalem in the days of Hezekiah (701 BC).

“In 605 BC Jeremiah declared ‘I am shut up,’ referring to the fact that he was restricted from going into the temple area (Jer 36:5). The Hebrew word he used (*atsur*) is ambiguous. It can mean ‘imprisoned’ or ‘in custody.’ In fact, it is the word in Jeremiah 33:1 that refers to his imprisonment. Later, in 601 BC [or before 605 BC²⁴⁸], Jeremiah was punished by being put in ‘the stocks’ (Jer 20:1–6). The Hebrew word used here is also not clear; some translations take it as meaning ‘imprisoned.’”²⁴⁹

“If Nephi's Zedekiah is the same as the Biblical Jehoiakim, then both the timing of the prophecies near the beginning of his reign, as well as the response of the people, are in perfect agreement.”²⁵⁰ For example, “in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah [Jehoiakim] ... there came *many prophets*, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city *Jerusalem must be destroyed*” (1 Ne 1:4). Like Jeremiah and Urijah, Lehi prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem and “the Jews did mock him. ... When the Jews heard these things they were angry with him ... and ... sought his life, that they might take it away” (1 Ne 1:19–20). The day Jeremiah was in the stocks or prison may have been what Nephi referred to when he said Jeremiah had been put in prison (1 Ne 7:14).

In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar defeated the king of Egypt and “conquered the whole area of Hatti-country” which included Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar settled the affairs of Egypt and arranged for the captive Jews, Phoenicians, and Syrians to be taken to Babylon before he became king (*Ant* 10.219 [10.11.1]). Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were among the first who were taken captive. Their names were changed to Beltshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego (*Dan* 1:1–6).²⁵¹ In September 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar II became king of Babylon. (¶431) He appears to have been named after Nebuchadnezzar I, an earlier king of Babylon (1124–1103 BC). Wiseman refers to ‘Nebuchadnezzar’ as a throne name.²⁵²

In 604 BC, “all the kings of Hatti-land came before him and he received their tribute.’ It may well be supposed that Jehoiakim was among the kings making submission at that time.” (¶435)²⁵³ Jehoiakim paid tribute for three years. When Jehoiakim heard that Nebuchadnezzar “made an expedition against the Egyptians, he did not pay his tribute ...”²⁵⁴ In Nov./Dec. of 601 BC, the Babylonian army was sent to maintain “Babylonian prestige and control” and to help collect the annual tribute.²⁵⁵ At this time Jehoiakim was punished for rebellion. “The LORD sent” bands of Nebuchadnezzar’s vassal kingdoms “against Judah *to destroy it*, according to the word of the LORD,

which he spake by his servants the prophets” (2 Kgs 24:1–2). We do not have a record of this first partial destruction of Jerusalem that fulfilled the words of the prophets.

Like Moses and the Israelites, Lehi and his family were delivered from bondage and led in the wilderness for many years before arriving at a promised land (see Alma 9:9, 36:28–29).²⁵⁶ Moses left Egypt at Passover and Lehi could have left Jerusalem at Passover, 6 Apr 601 BC, 600 years before the birth of Jesus. The first destruction of Jerusalem about eight months later in Dec. 601 BC fulfilled Nephi’s prophecy that Jerusalem would be destroyed “immediately after my father left Jerusalem” (2 Ne 25:10).²⁵⁷

Laman and Lemuel did not believe “that Jerusalem ... could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets” (1 Ne 2:12–13). If they had left before this first destruction, they would have been like the priests who mocked and tried to kill Jeremiah and Urijah for prophesying against Jerusalem. If they had left after this destruction in 601 BC or after Nebuchadnezzar had taken thousands of captives in 597 BC, it would have been harder for them to doubt the words of the prophets.

King Jehoiachin. In his 11th year, Jehoiakim died on Dec 9, 598 BC or Jan 16, 597 BC (¶431). Nebuchadnezzar made his son, Jehoiachin, king (Jer 37:1; 2 Kgs. 24:6).²⁵⁸ Jehoiachin was also known as Jeconiah, Joachin, and Coniah.²⁵⁹ Although it is not stated explicitly, Jehoiachin appears to have been his ‘throne name.’ Josephus said Nebuchadnezzar took 3,000 captives at this time (*Ant* 10.96 [10.6.3]).

Just before or after the death of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar’s army began a siege against Jerusalem in the month of Kislimu, which began on Dec. 18, 598 BC (¶437). “Since Jehoiakim’s death took place three months and ten days before the city’s fall, that is ... 6/7 Dec. 598 BC, he must have died and have been succeeded by Jehoiachin before the main forces had left Babylonia.”²⁶⁰ This seems to suggest that Nebuchadnezzar might not have made Jehoiachin king.

King Zedekiah. On March 16, 597 BC, Jerusalem was seized and Jehoiachin was captured. Jehoiachin, his family, and leading state and military officials were taken captive to Babylon. Josephus said 3,000 were taken captive when Jehoiachin became king and 10,832 were taken captive when Zedekiah became king three months later (*Ant* 10.96 [10.6.3]; 10.99 [10.7.1]).²⁶¹

Nebuchadnezzar appointed “a king of his own choice, received its heavy tribute and sent them to Babylon.” (¶437) “The king of Babylon made Mattaniah ... king ..., and changed his name to Zedekiah” (2 Kgs. 24:17). “This [name] change also served as a public testimony to the subservient position held by Zedekiah on oath to Nebuchadnezzar ‘that he would certainly keep the kingdom for him and make no innovation, nor have any league of friendship with the Egyptians’” (*Ant* 10.102 [10.7.1]).

Jeremiah said the Lord would “deliver Zedekiah ... into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. ... He that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence” (Jer 21:7, 9). In 587 BC, “Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison” for making such prophesies (Jer 32:2).

“After Lehi's group left Jerusalem, they traveled across the wilderness for eight years and arrived at Bountiful (1 Ne 17:4–5) ... in 593 BC. ... At that time Nephi referred to the final destruction of Jerusalem as a yet future event: ‘I know that the day must surely come that they must be destroyed, *save a few only*, who shall be led away into captivity’ (1 Ne 17:43). Note that he declared that ‘*a few only*’ would be taken captive, whereas Lehi had prophesied that ‘*many*’ would be taken to Babylon. ... Years later, after they had crossed the ocean to the promised land, Lehi received the confirming revelation that Jerusalem had finally been destroyed (2 Ne 1:4). That revelation must have come after the final 587 BC destruction.”²⁶²

On Jan 15, 588 BC, “Nebuchadnezzar came against his faithless appointee and with his whole army laid siege to Jerusalem (2 Kgs 25:1). ... The siege went on for slightly more than two and one-half years until at last famine was unbearably

severe in the city, a breach was made in the city, the king and men of war fled by night but were overtaken ..., and Zedekiah was captured and taken to Nebuchadnezzar ... where his sons were slain before his eyes and he was blinded and taken off to Babylon and to prison. ... The highly probable date of the final fall of Jerusalem [was] July 18, 586 BC.” (§442) About a month later, “Nebuzaradan, Nebuchadnezzar’s captain ..., came to Jerusalem; he burned the house of the Lord, and the king’s house and all the houses of Jerusalem, and his army broke down the walls around the city; he carried away to Babylon both treasures and people, and left behind only some of the poorest of the land (2 Kgs 25:8–12; Jer 52:12–16).” (§443) According to Jeremiah, only 832 people were taken captive at this time (Jer 52:29).

Table 29: Chronology if Jehoiakim was Nephi’s Zedekiah²⁶³

Year	Event
608 BC	First year of Jehoiakim (Nephi’s Zedekiah?). Jeremiah prophesied Jerusalem's destruction.
608-607 BC	Lehi began to prophesy of Jerusalem's destruction when “many” captives would be taken.
605 BC	Babylon replaced Egypt as world power and took control of Judah. A few princes taken captive (First deportation).
604 BC	All the kings came before Nebuchadnezzar and paid tribute. Jehoiakim paid tribute for three years.
6 Apr 601 BC	Lehi left Jerusalem, 600 years before birth of Christ on 6 Apr 1 BC.
Dec 601 BC	Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. Jerusalem partially destroyed (First destruction).
Dec 598 BC	Jehoiakim executed, Jehoiachin began to reign. About 3,000 taken captive (Second deportation).
Mar 597 BC	About 10,000 taken captive to Babylon (Third deportation). Then Zedekiah began to reign.
593 BC	Nephi prophesies in Bountiful of Jerusalem's final destruction when “few” captives would be taken.
June 587 BC	Jerusalem destroyed (Second destruction). About 800 (a ‘few’) were taken captive (Fourth deportation).

Jehoiakim as Nephi’s “Zedekiah”. Why would Nephi call Jehoiakim “Zedekiah”? Why was Jehoiakim called “Zedekiah” once in the Bible (Jer 27:1)? ²⁶⁴ Pratt suggests several plausible explanations.²⁶⁵

1. A writer, copyist, or translator made an error. Scholars believe a copyist made an error in Jeremiah 27:1.
2. Zedekiah might have been another name for Jehoiakim. For example, a person might have a full name and nick name, or a religious name and a secular name.²⁶⁶ Jehoiakim also had a son named Zedekiah (1 Chron 3:16) who never became king.
3. “Zedekiah” might have been a title used interchangeably with the name Jehoiakim.
4. “Nebuchadnezzar might have changed Jehoiakim's name to Zedekiah. At that time, every king of Judah had his name changed by the dominating nation, as a mark of subservience.” Table 30 shows the name changes. “Note that the Biblical narrative does not always mention every name change; we only learn of Shallum's name in a revelation where the Lord refers to him by his original name (see Jer 22:11, compare 1 Chr 3:15). The only king in this entire period for whom no name change is recorded when a new world power took command is Jehoiakim. Thus, the possibility that Nebuchadnezzar changed Jehoiakim's name to Zedekiah would follow established precedence.”²⁶⁷

Table 30: Name Changes²⁶⁸

Name	New Name	Suzerain	Year	Ref
Shallum	Jehoahaz	Pharoah Necho	609 BC	2 Kgs 23:30; Jer 22:11
Eliakim	Jehoiakim	Pharoah Necho	608 BC	2 Kgs 23:34
Jehoiakim	Zedekiah??	Nebuchadnezzar	604 BC	
Daniel	Beltshazzar	Nebuchadnezzar	604 BC	Dan 1:7
Jeconiah	Jehoiachin	Nebuchadnezzar	598 BC	
Mattaniah	Zedekiah	Nebuchadnezzar	597 BC	2 Kgs 24:17

Seasons of War. After analyzing Book of Mormon wars and Mesoamerican weather patterns, Sorenson⁹⁰ said, “With overwhelming probability, the Nephite calendar system used to report their wars in the first century BC placed their new year day at or very near the winter solstice,” Dec 22.²⁶⁹ If Lehi left

Jerusalem on April 5/6, 601 BC (Passover) and used a 365-day calendar that started when he left, the start of the first century BC would have been 125 days earlier (Dec. 6, 101 BC) and the new year before Apr. 6, 1 BC would have been 146 days (Nov. 12, 2 BC). These dates appear to be “near the winter solstice” as Sorenson’s analysis proposed.

Summary. “In summary, the simple proposal that Nephi may have been referring to Jehoiakim as “Zedekiah” explains: (1) how Jerusalem was destroyed immediately after Lehi's departure in 601 BC, and *many* were taken captive thereafter in 597 BC, fulfilling Lehi's prophecy; (2) how Nephi's prophecy in about 593 BC that Jerusalem would yet be destroyed and “few” would be taken captive was fulfilled in 587 BC; and (3) how the Savior's birth on 6 April 1 BC would have been 600 years after Lehi's departure, as the angel had declared to Lehi.”²⁷⁰

What month did Lehi leave Jerusalem?

After Lehi left Jerusalem, Lehi “came down by the borders near the shore of the Red Sea; and he traveled in the wilderness in the borders which are nearer the Red Sea; And ... when he had traveled three days in the wilderness, he pitched his tent in a valley by the side of a river of water.” Lehi then named the river Laman. (1 Ne 2:5– 6, 9; 16:12)

Spackman assumed this river was a *wadi* that was normally dry except during the rainy season (Dec.–Feb.) and concluded that these verses indicated Lehi left Jerusalem at this time.²⁷¹ He assumes that “Lehi’s 600-year count began with the new moon of January 19 ... 587 BC.”²⁷²

Chadwick said that “a perennial stream is *not* required to fulfill Nephi's description or Lehi's exclamation. Lehi said ‘continually running,’ not ‘continually flowing.’ A Near Eastern wadi's streambed can run all the way to the sea whether water happens to be flowing in it or not. I have no doubt that water was flowing when Lehi made his statement. ... Winter rains begin in the ... region as early as November and continue until as late as April, so that in any given year some of the seasonal streams in the region's *wadis* could conceivably flow as long as

five months.” Chadwick believed a four-month “stay at the valley of Lemuel, from mid-November to mid-April” would allow enough time for the events of that time period.²⁷³

Potter found a “*wadi* or canyon” with a “stream that started in the canyon near its upper end and ran down the *wadi* virtually all the way to the sea. This small desert river appeared to flow continually night and day, year after year.”²⁷⁴ Wadi Tayyib al-Isim “holds a stream that flows year-round. Moreover, even though the amount of water flowing in the stream has diminished in recent years because of pumping, it still reaches almost to the shore of the Red Sea. ... [This] desert region ... features no other known ‘continually running’ stream.”²⁷⁵

Tvedtnes cites ancient written sources that “support the idea that there were rivers flowing in the western part of Arabia ... where Lehi encamped beside the river Laman.”²⁷⁶

Since Potter’s *wadi* was continually running, Lehi may have left anytime during the year. Pratt suggests that Lehi left Jerusalem on April 6, 601 BC (Passover), 600 years before Jesus was born on April 6, 1 BC. “Alma noted that Lehi’s departure had the same Passover symbolism as Moses’ departure from Egypt, in that Lehi was delivered from bondage and led through the wilderness to a promised land (see Alma 9:9, 36:28-29).”²⁷⁷

Part V: CONCLUSION

14: Summary and Conclusion

When putting a puzzle together, we find and put together the side pieces first. Then, the other pieces have to fit within the puzzle border. Similarly, scholars look at the evidence and then pick their anchor pieces. If other pieces of evidence do not seem to fit, they reinterpret the evidence or justify ignoring it.

According to Josephus, Herod died after a lunar eclipse and before a Passover. Most scholars believe Herod died before the Passover in 4 BC, 1 BC, or AD 1. The positions of each group of scholars are summarized below.

4 BC Scholars

When did Herod die? The key anchor piece for most scholars is that Herod died after the lunar eclipse of 15 Sept. 5 BC or 13 Mar. 4 BC and before the Passover of 4 BC. Some scholars say Herod died a few days after 1 Nisan (Mar./Apr.) in 4 BC so that a few days can count as the 34th or 37th year of Herod's reign. To allow more time between the eclipse and the Passover for the events described by Josephus, other scholars believe Herod died in December 5 BC according to a Jewish tradition. There are good reasons to believe that Herod died in 5/4 BC.

When was Jesus baptized? Luke says John started baptizing in the 15th year of Tiberius and that Jesus was “about thirty” when he was baptized by John. If “about thirty” means 29 to 31, the 15th year refers to 26 AD based on when Tiberius became a joint ruler. However, with only one apparent exception, the first year of Tiberius is counted from when he became the sole ruler a few years later. Therefore, some scholars believe “about thirty” must mean 26 to 34 because the 15th year refers to 29 AD when Jesus was 32.7–33.3 years old.

When was Jesus born? Since Herod died in 5/4 BC, Jesus was born a few months or years earlier. Most non-LDS scholars believe Jesus was born a few months before Herod died. If

Jesus had been born too much earlier, Jesus would no longer be considered “about thirty” at baptism.

When was Jesus buried? Most non-LDS scholars believe Jesus died and was buried in April, AD 30 or 33. If Jesus was born in Dec. 5 BC, he would have been 33.3 or 36.3 when he died. If he was born in Apr. 5 BC, he would have been 34 or 37 when he died. Since the Gospels imply at most four Passovers after Jesus was baptized, scholars who believe Jesus was baptized in 26 AD usually pick a burial year of AD 30, while those who believe Jesus was baptized in 29 AD usually pick a burial year of AD 33.

Jesus died on 1/4/34. The Book of Mormon says Jesus died on the fourth day of the first month of the 34th year after the sign of his birth (3 Ne 8:3,5). Some LDS scholars imply that this verse should be ignored because we do not know how the Nephite year compared to the Jewish year. Some LDS scholars say Jesus died in AD 30 and interpret this verse to mean that Jesus died when he was 34 years old. However, other LDS scholars interpret this verse as meaning that Jesus was 33 years old. One argues that Jesus died in AD 29, while another argues that Jesus was born during the Passover on 11 Apr. 4 BC and Herod died after the eclipse of 4 BC and before the Passover of 3 BC, a year later.

2 BC Scholars

When did Herod die? Herod died after the lunar eclipse of 10 Jan. 1 BC and before the Passover of 1 BC. This allows enough time between the eclipse and the Passover for the events described by Josephus. Josephus did *not* count the years of Herod’s reign inclusively. The reigns of Herod’s successors must have been antedated or recorded incorrectly (e.g., Philip). There are good reasons to doubt that Herod died in 5/4 BC.

When was Jesus born? Since Herod died in 2 BC, Jesus was born a few months earlier in 3/2 BC. This fits with most of the dates indicated by early Christian writers and with other evidence.

When was Jesus baptized? Luke says John started baptizing in the 15th year of Tiberius and that Jesus was “about thirty” when baptized by John. With only one apparent exception, the first year of Tiberius is counted from when he became the sole ruler. Therefore, Jesus was baptized in 29 AD when he was almost 31, and “about thirty” means 29–31.

When was Jesus buried? Jesus died and was buried in April, AD 30 or 33. If Jesus was born in Dec. 2 BC, he would have been 31.3 or 34.3 when he died. If he was born in Apr. 2 BC, he would have been 32 or 35 when he died. Those who believe Jesus died in AD 30 also believe he died at the first Passover after he was baptized. Those who believe he died in AD 33 also believe he died at the fourth Passover after he was baptized.

Jesus died on 1/4/34. The Book of Mormon says Jesus died on the fourth day of the first month of the 34th year after the sign of his birth (3 Ne 8:3, 5). Non-LDS scholars do not believe this piece of evidence. I am not aware of any LDS scholars who believe Herod died in 2 BC.

AD 1 Scholars

When was Jesus born? Jesus was born 6 April 1 BC on Passover night.

When was Jesus baptized? Luke says John started baptizing in the 15th year of Tiberius and that Jesus was “about thirty” when baptized by John. With only one apparent exception, the first year of Tiberius is counted from when he became the sole ruler. Therefore, Jesus was baptized in 29 AD when he was “almost thirty.” He turned thirty at the next Passover when his public ministry began.

When was Jesus buried? Jesus died and was buried in April, AD 33, when he was 33 years old. This year is one of the two most likely years for the crucifixion.

Jesus died on 1/4/34. The Book of Mormon says Jesus died on the fourth day of the first month of the 34th year after the sign of his birth (3 Ne 8:3,5). Jesus died 3 days and 33 ‘Nephite years’ after the sign of his birth. A ‘Nephite year’

appears to have been 365-days. Therefore, Jesus lived 12,048 days which is exactly the number of days between 6 Apr. 1 BC and 3 Apr. AD 33 when he died.

When did Herod die? Since Jesus was born 6 Apr. 1 BC, Herod must have died after the 29 Dec. 1 BC eclipse and before the Passover in AD 1. Josephus did *not* count the years of Herod's reign inclusively. The reigns of Herod's successors must have been antedated or recorded incorrectly (e.g., Philip). There are good reasons to doubt that Herod died in 5/4 BC.

Conclusion

There are good reasons to believe that Herod died in 5/4 BC. There are also good reasons to doubt this and to believe Herod died in 1 BC or AD 1. There are good reasons to believe that Jesus was born in 5/4 BC as Elder Hyrum Smith stated in 1923. However, there are also good reasons to believe Jesus was born on 6 Apr. 1 BC as Elder Talmage stated.

What are the correct interpretations for the evidence we do have? What evidence is based on incorrect translation, transmission, or information? What are the missing pieces? Scholars who are aware of the evidence have come to different conclusions. They attack the conclusions of others while defending their own. It reminds me of Joseph Smith's comment about the religions of his time.

“The [4 BC scholars] were most decided against the [1 BC and the AD 1 scholars], and used all the powers of both reason and sophistry to prove their errors, or, at least, to make the people think they were in error. On the other hand, the [1 BC and the AD 1 scholars] in their turn were equally zealous in endeavoring to establish their own [opinions] and disprove all others. In the midst of this war of words and tumult of opinions, I often said to myself: Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together? If any one of them be right, which is it, and how shall I know it?” (JS—H 1:9–10)

I look forward to finding out in this life or the next what really happened. Until then, I am content knowing that Jesus was born, baptized, buried, and resurrected.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Jewish Calendar

Enoch

The Bible tells us little about Enoch who lived about the time of Noah and before the flood. We learn more in modern revelation and in non-biblical writings. Enoch said “as I stood upon the mount, I beheld the heavens open, and I was clothed upon with glory; And I saw the Lord; and he stood before my face, and he talked with me ... face to face; and he said unto me: Look, and I will show unto thee the world for the space of many generations” (Moses 7:3–4). “In *Jub.* 4:17 ... it is said that Enoch ‘wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months.’” (¶97) “The Book of Enoch states that the angel Uriel revealed [the constellations] to the prophet Enoch, long before the Great Flood ... All 48 constellation figures from Enoch depict the gospel of Jesus Christ.”²⁷⁸

Jesus and his apostles quoted from the Book of Enoch (also called 1 Enoch) as authentic scripture. It was once in the Bible and was accepted as having been written by Enoch himself. ... The scholar and translator R. H. Charles declared, ‘The influence of 1 Enoch on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books taken together.’”²⁷⁹

In the *Book of Jubilees* and in the *Book of Enoch*, we learn about the Enoch calendar. This 364-day calendar consisted of twelve 30-day months with an extra day added after the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth months. Thus, there were 13 weeks in every quarter and 52 weeks in a year. Passover and other festivals were always on the same day of the week every year. If a ‘leap’ week was added every seven years, the average year would be 365-days. If an additional week was added every 28

years, the average year would be 365.25-days. If the 28-year leap week were skipped twice in 4368 years, the average year would be 365.2423-days which is better than our current Gregorian calendar.²⁸⁰

Abraham

Abraham was born about 2000/1800 BC. (§356–363) The Lord revealed to Abraham “the set time of the earth ... and ... of the greater light which is set to rule the day, and ... of the lesser light which is set to rule the night. ... And it is given unto thee to know the set time of all the stars” (Abr 3:6, 10).

Josephus said that “Abraham ‘consorted with the most learned of the Egyptians’ and ‘introduced them to arithmetic and transmitted to them the laws of astronomy.’” (§276)

According to an apocryphal writer, Abraham “taught the Phoenicians the changes of the sun and the moon and all things of that sort.” Later Abraham went to Egypt. “He dwelt with the Egyptian priests in Heliopolis ... and taught them many things; and it was he who introduced astronomy/astrology and the other sciences ... to them, saying that the Babylonians and himself had found these things out, but tracing back the first discovery to Enoch.” “Thus, what Abraham communicated to the Egyptians and what Enoch was the first to discover ... was astronomy/astrology and the other sciences ...” (§268).

Abraham said, “the records of the fathers, even the patriarchs, concerning the right of Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands; therefore a *knowledge* of the beginning of the creation, and also of the *planets*, and of the *stars*, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, *for the benefit of my posterity* that shall come after me.” (Abr 1:31)

After Abraham, left Babylon, he went to Haran and then to the land of Canaan which included Phoenicia. (This area included Israel as well as the coastal lands and parts of Lebanon and Syria.) After living ten years in the land of Canaan, Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac (Gen 16:3; 16–18). Isaac

also had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Jacob's name was later changed to Israel and his descendents became known as Israelites. It is possible that Abraham influenced the Canaanite calendars used by his other descendents in the land of Canaan (Gen 16:3).

Israelite Calendars

Egypt. Joseph was sold into Egypt between 1700 and 1500 BC. Not long after that, Joseph's father, Israel, and his eleven brothers moved to Egypt because of a famine. Joseph married Asenath, "the daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis (Gen 41:45; 46:20)." ²⁸¹ As second to Pharaoh, Joseph would have been taught in the learning of these priests. Joseph "remembered the words which Jacob his father used to read from amongst the words of Abraham." ²⁸² "Israel ... gave all his books and the books of his fathers to Levi his son that he might preserve them and renew them for his children." (*Jub* 45:16)

According to Origen, "Moses got his religion as well as his education from the Egyptians." ²⁸³ Like Abraham, Moses "saw God face to face, and he talked with him" and saw the workmanship of God's hands. (*Moses* 1:2-4)

The Israelites left Egypt between 1500 and 1250 BC. (¶372) After living in Egypt for several hundred years, they would have become familiar with three Egyptian Calendars: a 365.25-day lunar calendar, a 365-day lunar calendar, and a 365-day civil calendar of twelve 30-day months plus five days at the end of the year. ²⁸⁴

Canaan. After leaving Egypt, the Israelites spent 40 years in the desert before returning to the land of Canaan and settling in the part we call Israel. For centuries before and after this time, the land of Canaan was a tributary to Egypt. During this time, months were designated by Canaanite names (e.g., Abib) and number (e.g., 1st, 12th). (¶60, ¶65-66)

The Canaanites probably used a 365-day or 365.25-day lunar calendar (¶61) and the 365-day 'pentecontad' calendar. "Until approximately 1000 BC ... practically all the Western Semitic peoples ... employed ... the 'pentecontad calendar.'" ²⁸⁵ The

‘pentecontad’ calendar is closely related to the Enoch and Jubilee calendars²⁸⁶ and consisted of seven 50-day periods plus 15 festival days²⁸⁷ or seven 49-day periods plus 22 festival days²⁸⁸.

As international commercial activities increased, Solomon introduced a 365-day solar calendar of probably twelve 30-day months plus 5 days similar to that used by the Phoenicians.²⁸⁹ From king Solomon (c. 970 BC) to king Zedekiah (c. 597–586 BC), “the Egyptian and Phoenician influences were strong in Israel and both would be expected to have contributed to the solar emphasis.” (¶62)

Jewish Calendar

Between 609 and 586 BC most Jewish leaders were taken captive to Babylonia. Between 537 and 432 BC, some Jewish leaders (e.g., Ezra, Nehemiah) returned to rebuild the temple and govern the country. After 50 to 150 years in Babylonia, the Jewish leaders changed the official Jewish calendar based on the Babylonian calendar.²⁹⁰ The day began at sunset. People “who begin their day in the evening ... base their month ... [on] events which are observable in the evening.”²⁹¹ The month began when the new crescent moon was first visible in the evening after the new moon. Thus, the 15th of each month was a full moon.



Babylonian names (e.g., Nisan and Tishri) were used for the months instead of numbers (e.g., 1st or 7th) or the old Canaanite names (e.g., Abib and Ethanin). Passover was moved from “the night of the new moon which preceded the spring equinox” to the 15th during the full moon.²⁹² The months were numbered from the spring and Babylonian names were used (e.g., Nisan, Tishri). A calendar council determined when to add an extra or leap month. It may have been in AD 400–700 when the Jews began using the Babylonian system of intercalation or adding a ‘leap’ month seven times every nineteen years. (¶64–73, ¶78–81)

Other Jewish Calendars

“After the exile [c. 540 BC] ... it was the Babylonian calendar that was the most influential in Palestine.” (§64) “But it is likely that nearly all this concern for change was on the part of Jewish priestly reformers while most of the population preferred to continue with the old ways. Certainly two, and later at least three, calendar systems coexisted.”²⁹³

Qumran Calendar. “The calendar of *Jubilees* seems ... to have been the calendar of the Qumran community. The community was willing to use the Babylonian calendar for matters of everyday life, but for dating the all important festivals of the religious year it adhered to this other calendar.” (§110) “The Book of Enoch ... may imply that the day begins at dawn.”²⁹⁴ “The Covenanters of Qumran, having retained or adopted the solar calendar ... naturally began the day at sunrise.”²⁹⁵ The Essenes of Qumran had Egyptian connections.²⁹⁶ “The Essene societies are in a number of cases to be traced in their origins to Egypt.”²⁹⁷

Sunrise-Day. For the ancient Israelites prior to the Babylonian captivity, the day began at sunrise (§12). We do not know how these sunrise Israelites determined the start of their lunar month. It may have been the morning *after* the new crescent moon was seen the prior evening. When later Jews started their day at sunset, the day began a half day *earlier* (§12).

These sunrise Israelites may have followed the pattern of the Egyptians. While living in Egypt for several hundred years before Moses and the exodus, they would have become familiar with Egyptian days and months. “The day in Egypt began at dawn, and was reckoned from one dawn to the next.”²⁹⁸ Like the Egyptians, Israelites referred to months by number and by names (§42–43, 59–60).

“As long as the Israelites counted the day from morning to morning, they probably followed the Egyptian custom to fix the beginning of the month.”²⁹⁹ People like the Egyptians who began their day in the morning based their month on events associated with the morning. “The Egyptian lunar month ... [began] on that morning when the *old* crescent could *no longer*

be seen.”³⁰⁰ The new crescent moon would be visible in the evening of the second day (70%) or the third day (30%).³⁰¹ If sunrise Jews also started their month in this way, about 70% of the time, the sunset of their 14th would be 24 hours before the 14th that began at sunset. The other 30% of the time, it would be 48 hours earlier. For astronomers, a new moon or conjunction occurs when the sun and the moon are together in the same part of the sky. A total solar eclipse occurs only during a conjunction when the moon is exactly between the sun and a viewer on earth. With the naked eye, the moon is invisible for about 15 to 30 hours before and after conjunction. “If conjunction occurs close to midnight ..., it is theoretically possible, given the exceptionally favorable conditions which result in the minimum hours for visibility, that the new crescent may be seen at sunset on [the 1st day]. In all my calculations, however, I have not encountered an instance of this.”³⁰²

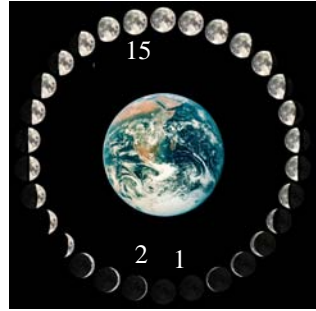


Table 31: Sunrise and Sunset Months

	☾								
Sunrise*	☾		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th		
Sunset (70%)				☾ 1 st	2 nd	3 rd			
Sunset (30%)					☾ 1 st	2 nd			
Sunset (<1%)			☾ 1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th			

* ☾= last visible crescent before sunrise, ☾= first visible crescent in evening

Appendix B: The Last Week of Jesus

The last week begins with Jesus having supper at Bethany and being anointed. The next day was the Triumphal Entry when Jesus rode a colt into Jerusalem at Bethany. Jesus cleanses the temple one day and teaches at the temple the next day. He has the Last Supper with his disciples and then suffers in Gethsemane. After being arrested and tried by the Jews and Romans, Jesus is crucified and buried. On Sunday Jesus was resurrected.

Most scholars believe Jesus was crucified and buried on Friday afternoon. Other possibilities were mentioned in chapter **11**, “Death of Jesus.” In this appendix, a Friday crucifixion is assumed.

Anointing and Triumphal Entry

“Six days before the passover [Jesus] came to Bethany. ... There they made him a supper” and Mary anointed him. “On the next day” was the Triumphal Entry when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a colt. (Jn 12:1-13)

Assuming the Passover was on Friday night, one day before the Passover would refer to anytime on Thursday. After the crucifixion and near the end of “the *day before* the Sabbath,” Joseph of Arimathæa asked Pilate for Jesus’ body for burial (Mk 15:42-43). This occurred only a few hours before sunset when the Sabbath began. “A day before” can also mean a full day. “Now the LORD had told Samuel ... *a day before* Saul came, saying, *To morrow about this time* I will send thee a man ... and thou shalt anoint him to be” king (1 Sam 9:15–16). Table 32 shows that the supper Saturday evening is “six days before the Passover” using sunset or sunrise days.

Table 32: Six Days Before Passover

	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	T	F	Ⓟ	Sa	Su	
Sunset*	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	Ⓟ	1 st	2 nd	
Sunrise	-7	-6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	1 st	Ⓟ	2 nd	3 rd
Events	Ⓢ	📖	Ⓢ	🐎					Ⓟ	📖	

* Ⓢ=supper and anointed, Ⓟ=Passover, 📖=Sabbath, 🐎=Triumphal Entry

Most scholars assume John uses the official sunset-day. Therefore, “six days before” is from Saturday evening to Sunday at sunset when “the next day” begins. Several interpretations “six days before” are possible.

1. Some scholars say Jesus had supper Saturday evening and “the next day” began at sunset on Sunday. This puts the Triumphal Entry on Monday.³⁰³
2. Some scholars believe Jesus arrived a day earlier (six full days before) and had supper on Friday evening at the start of the Sabbath. “The next day” began Saturday night which puts the Triumphal Entry on Sunday.³⁰⁴
3. Some scholars place the supper on Saturday evening and the Triumphal Entry on Sunday without trying to explain “the next day.”³⁰⁵
4. One scholar places the Triumphal Entry on Sunday by assuming John counts the days “inclusively”³⁰⁶ which in this case appears to mean counting complete days instead counting a part of a day as a full day.
5. “The next day” is a translation for the Greek word *epaúrion* which is also translated as “day following” or “morrow.” When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea of Galilee at night during the fourth watch (3–6 AM), “the day following” (*epaúrion*) the people found Jesus on the other side of the sea (Jn 6:16–25; Mt 14:25–27). Here John uses the same Greek word to refer to the next morning or period of daylight only a few hours later. Therefore, Jesus can arrive Saturday evening for supper “six days before” and “on the next day” or morning (Sunday) ride into Jerusalem.

“After Two Days”

Jesus said “*after two days* is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.” Then the Jewish leaders plotted to take Jesus and kill him. That evening they had supper at Simon’s house in Bethany and “a woman” anointed Jesus. Judas went to the chief priests and arranged to betray Jesus. (Mt 26:2–5; Mk 14:1–10; Lk 7:37–50) In John, Jesus went to Bethany “six days before the Passover” (Jn 12:1) and Mary anoints Jesus during supper (Jn 12:2–3).

Some scholars assume that John refers to the same supper and anointing as Matthew and Mark on Tuesday evening³⁰⁷ or Saturday evening.³⁰⁸ Others assume that the anointing by Mary in John’s account happened Saturday evening and the anointing by a woman happened on Tuesday evening.³⁰⁹

If “after three days” means on the third day,³¹⁰ then “after two days” would mean on the second or next day. If the “after two days” prophecy was made during the day time, the Last Supper would be that evening if Matthew used sunset-days or the next evening if he used sunrise-days as he does elsewhere. After the prophecy, Matthew and Mark both say the evening was spent at Simon’s house. Although some scholars say this supper was on Saturday, no scholar puts the Last Supper on the night of the prophecy. Thus, Matthew appears to be using sunrise-days or the prophecy was made after sunset.

Many scholars insist the “after three days” crucifixion prophecy means less than 36 hours, but the “after two days” Last Supper prophecy means more than 48 hours. Chronologies that have the Triumphal Entry on Sunday and the Last Supper on Thursday show no events on Wednesday day or evening. However, using inclusive counting and a sunset-sunset day, the Last Supper would be on the fourth day (after four days) unless the prophecy was made after sunset. Also, using inclusive counting and a sunrise-sunrise day, the Last Supper would be on the third day (after three days). Therefore, if the prophecy was on Tuesday, the Last Supper would have been on the next night (Wednesday). If the Last Supper was on Thursday, the prophecy would have been on Wednesday. (See Table 34.)

The Last Supper

“According to the synoptic Gospels [Matthew, Mark, Luke], Thursday was the 14th of Nisan and Friday was the 15th, while John indicates that Thursday was the 13th and Friday was the 14th—the day of the preparation for the Passover—and Saturday was the 15th, a Passover that occurred on the Sabbath. . . . There are only three possible options to this chronological problem:

1. the synoptic account that the last Supper was a Passover meal is correct, and John’s account must be interpreted accordingly;
2. John’s account that the Last Supper occurred the day before Passover is correct, and the synoptic accounts should be interpreted accordingly, or
3. the two accounts are both correct, and ultimately they can be harmonized.

No consensus exists among scholars as to which option is best.”³¹¹

Some scholars believe the Last Supper was on the same night as the Passover. Some believe it was a farewell meal the night *before* the Passover. Other scholars have suggested that there were two Passovers and thus the Last Supper was a Passover meal for some Jews that was held on a night before the Passover for other Jews. Good summaries of the arguments for and against each option are available.³¹²

Defiled. When Jesus was delivered to Pilate after the Last Supper, the Jews “went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover” (Jn 18:28).

“If the Last Supper was *the* Passover, how on the next day could the Jews say they had not eaten the Passover?” This appears to rule out the first option.³¹³

To many, this verse also indicates that Jesus was delivered to Pilate the morning before the Passover meal. However, it could have happened several days before because defilement from entering the house of a pagan lasted seven days according to the Mishnah.³¹⁴

Two Passovers. Some scholars believe the Last Supper was a Passover meal held for some Jews earlier than the official Passover on Friday evening. Therefore, all four accounts in the Gospels are correct. The following is a brief summary of the arguments for a Passover meal before the official Passover.

1. Thursday Evening.

- a. The Jews living away from Jerusalem ate the Passover on the night before those in Jerusalem. Mark's account could have assumed the earlier Passover date. (§610)
 - b. "Since not all the Paschal lambs could be slain before the Sabbath (Nisan 15) began, they were slain on Thursday evening (Nisan 13)." Because the Passover was to be eaten the night it was slain (Ex. 12:10), the Pharisees ate the Passover Thursday night while the Sadducees waited until Friday night when the Sabbath started.³¹⁵
 - c. **Pharisees.** Because Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed about when Pentecost should start, the Sadducees fixed "the beginning of Nisan so that Nisan 14 would be on Friday. ... However, the Pharisees reckoned the month to have begun one day earlier." They compromised and had "two consecutive days for Passover."³¹⁶
 - d. **Sunrise-Day.** Jesus, his disciples, and other Galileans "followed the old custom and counted the day as beginning at sunrise. Then the day when the Passover lamb was slain and the day when the unleavened bread was eaten were indeed the same day, as Mark 14:12 states." Thus, 14 Nisan went from sunrise Thursday to sunrise Friday. (§611, §12–13) Palm Sunday would have been 10 Nisan when the Pascal Lamb was selected.
2. **Tuesday Evening.** According to the Qumran calendar, the Passover was eaten on Tuesday evening and the offering of the sheaf of first fruits was on the following Sunday. (§609, §93) If the sunrise Jews determined the 1st day of their sunrise-month like the Egyptians did, there as a 30% chance the month started 60 hours before the official sunset-month. Thus, the Last Supper would have been Wednesday evening allowing an extra 48 hours for the events preceding the crucifixion. These events are discussed below.

3. **Wednesday Evening.** If the sunrise Jews determined the 1st day of their sunrise-month like the Egyptians did, there is a 70% chance the month started 36 hours before the official sunset-month. Thus, the Last Supper would have been Wednesday evening allowing an extra 24 hours for the events preceding the crucifixion.

Appendix A provides more information about the sunrise solutions, the old Israelite calendar, and the later Jewish calendar.

Passover Lamb. In ancient Israel, “on the 10th day of the month, every family chose a one-year old lamb, a male and one without blemish; this lamb was killed at twilight on the 14th, and its blood was sprinkled over the lintel and the stiles of the door of the house. This was the *zebah* sacrifice, the meat of which had to be roasted and eaten on this same night of the full moon; not a bone of the victim was to be broken, and the remains ... were to be burnt. On the following day, the 15th, the feast of Unleavened Bread ... began. ... There is no priest, no altar, and the use of the blood is most important.”³¹⁷

After the priests centralized worship at Jerusalem in the time of Josiah (c. 640–609 BC), “the victim could be a head of cattle or a sheep or a goat; it was to be killed at sundown, not wherever a man lived, but ... in Jerusalem. ... ‘No Passover like this had ever been celebrated since the days of the Judges who ruled Israel. ...’ (2 Chr 35:18) ... The Passover had previously been a family feast kept in each town and in each home.”³¹⁸ The head of a family or group would take an unblemished sheep or goat to the temple and slit its throat. “A priest was there to catch the blood in a basin, which he passed along a line of priests to the altar where the last priest in line would splash the blood against the base of the altar. ... The offerer would then hang the carcass, skin it, prepare it for roasting, and offer the sacrificial parts of the animal ... on a tray to the priests, who would in turn burn them on the altar.”³¹⁹

“Any of [the two Passover] theories is conceivable, but no evidence exists ... that Passover was celebrated in Jerusalem on

more than one day—and especially that they sacrificed lambs at the temple on two different or consecutive days.”³²⁰

If the Last Supper was a Passover meal before the official Passover, where did they get a lamb? Three possible answers have been suggested.

1. **Special Permission.** Besides the Sadducees (temple priests), other Jewish sects included Pharisees (e.g., rabbis), Essenes from Qumran who preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Galileans.³²¹
 - a. If the Pharisees had Passover on a different night, they had enough political power to have their lambs killed at the temple as usual.³²²
 - b. According to Josephus and others, “the Essenes had most likely their own sacrificial district in the Temple of Jerusalem. This gave them an opportunity to have their own priests.”³²³
2. **Lamb killed at home.** The lambs may have been killed at home as was done before the time of Josiah when the temple priests began requiring sacrifices to be done at the temple.³²⁴
3. **No lamb used.** A lamb was not part of this Passover meal. This became a common practice after the Temple was destroyed in AD 70 and probably existed earlier among Jews who lived in other countries.³²⁵

Sunrise-Day. The official Passover sacrifice was to be killed at the temple on the afternoon of 14 Nisan. The sunrise-day solution (option 1d above) suggests that for the sunrise-Jews (Galileans) 14 Nisan started 12 hours *before* that of the sunset-Jews (Judeans). Why would they start 12 hours *before* instead of 12 hours *after* as they did their Sabbath?

1. If they started their sunrise-month 12 hours early, how did they know at the start of their sunrise-day that their sunrise-month would begin? If the Egyptian sunrise-system was used, the sunrise-month would have most likely started 36 or 60 hours before the sunset-month not 12 hours. (See Appendix A.) If the sunset-system was

- used, the sunrise-month would normally start 12 hours *after* the sunset-month.
2. If the sunrise-Jews wanted to eat the lamb the same day it was killed (14 Nisan), they would do it if their 14 Nisan began 12 hours before or *after* the sunset-day.
 3. According to the Mishnah, “It was the custom of the Galileans to do no work on the day of the Passover while the Judeans worked until midday.”³²⁶ This could apply to the sunrise-day starting *before* or *after* the sunset-day.
 4. Since most of the festivals occurred near the middle of a month, the sunrise-Jews may have decided to have their sunrise-day for festival purposes begin the morning of the official sunset-day.
 5. Normally a sunset-month began the evening when the new crescent moon was first visible. However, calendar council sometimes started the month a day early or a day late under some conditions. If the Sadducees started their sunset-month one day *after* the new crescent moon was visible for special purposes, the Pharisees may have started their sunset-month one day earlier (option 1d). If so, the sunrise-Jews may have started their day 12 hours after the Pharisee day and 12 hours before the Sadducee day.

Summary. Table 33 summarizes educated guesses regarding the day of the week and month of the crucifixion. Many scholars believe that the triumphal entry was on Sunday or Monday, Jesus cleansed the temple the next day, and taught at the temple on the third day. Many scholars put no events on ‘silent Wednesday’. Most scholars believe the crucifixion was on Friday and the resurrection was on Sunday.

Table 33: From Triumphal Entry to Resurrection

*	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
Matthew	10	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16-Nis	17-Nis
				??	??	Ⓟ	1 st P	1 st S
						Ⓛ	†	
John	9-	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15- Nis	16-Nis
Sunrise^a	9-Nis	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15- Nis	16-
12 hours <i>after</i>				??	??		Ⓟ	1 st PS
						Ⓛ	†	
Monday Entry ³²⁷							Ⓟ	1 st PS
						Ⓛ	†	
Pharisee	10-	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16- Nis	17-Nis
Sunrise¹	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16- Nis	17-
12 hours <i>before</i>						Ⓟ		Ⓟ
						Ⓛ	†	
Wed	9-	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15- Nis	16-Nis
Sunrise²	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16- Nis	17- Nis	18-
36 hours <i>before</i>					Ⓟ		Ⓟ	1 st P
					Ⓛ		†	
Tues	12-	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16-Nis	17-Nis	18- Nis	19-Nis
Sunrise³	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16- Nis	17- Nis	18- Nis	19-
60 hours <i>before</i>				Ⓟ			Ⓟ	1 st S
				Ⓛ			†	

* Ⓛ= Last Supper, Ⓟ= Passover, †= crucifixion, = Sabbath, =temple, = Triumphal Entry, =lamb sacrificed (3-5 p.m.), =extra trial day, = resurrection, 1st= First Fruits (P= Pharisees, S= Sadducees)

Preferences. After reviewing arguments for and against these Passover theories, scholars come to different conclusions.

- a. Jeremias believes the Last Supper was a Passover meal held on *15 Nisan* as implied in the accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.³²⁸

- b. Because the other solutions “are relatively unconvincing,” Finegan (1998) believes the Last Supper was a *farewell meal* on Thursday evening (14 Nisan) not a Passover meal as implied in John’s account (§613).
- c. Finegan (1964) said option 1d (*Sunrise-day*) is “the simplest and ... most convincing solution” (1964, ¶452), Hoehner said, “This interpretation eliminates the difficulties presented in John’s Gospel. ... In looking at the data, it was felt that the most tenable solution is to recognize that the Galileans, and with them Jesus and His disciples, reckoned from sunrise-to-sunrise while the Judeans reckoned from sunset-to-sunset.”³²⁹
- d. Marshall feels option 1c (*Pharisees*) “is the most plausible” two Passover option but that some others are not impossible. Since there is no reason to regard either the synoptic account or John’s account as mistaken, it seems best to accept a two Passover option “as a result of calendar differences among the Jews.”³³⁰
- e. Some scholars assume two Passovers without explaining which solution they prefer.³³¹
- f. “Some have suggested that until a convincing answer is found, ... we must temporarily suspend our judgment on the issue ... [and] read, understand, and learn from the synoptics and John according to their own accounts.”³³²

Arrest and Trials

If Jesus was arrested Thursday night after the Last Supper and put on the cross at 9:00 AM (“third hour,” Mk 15:25) or at noon (“sixth hour,” Jn 19:14), there were only 14–17 hours for all of the interim events mentioned below. This would also mean that Jewish leaders broke the laws found in the Mishnah.

In capital cases “they hold the trial *during the daytime* ... and the verdict must also be reached *during the daytime*. ... a verdict of condemnation not until the following day. Therefore trials may not be held on the eve of the Sabbath or on the eve of a festival day. (§612)

If the Last Supper was on Tuesday or Wednesday night, there would be one or two more days for these events without Jewish laws being broken.

1st Night Events. During the first night, Jesus has the Last Supper and then goes to Gethsemane. After being betrayed and arrested, Jesus is taken to the house of Annas, the high priest, where he is questioned. Annas sends Jesus to Caiaphas. Peter denies Jesus three times and then the cock crows.

1st Jewish Trial. When did the first trial before Caiaphas, the high priest, occur? In Matthew and Mark, two trials are mentioned. The first trial (Mt 26:58–75; Mk 14:54–72) appears in the same context as Peter’s denial *before* Jesus is mocked and therefore during the first night. However, John does not mention any trials and the only trial in Luke (22:66) is during the day *after* Jesus is mocked. Did the only trial in Luke refer to the first or second trial in Matthew and Mark? If the 1st Jewish trial was held at night, the trial violated Jewish law.

According to the traditional interpretation, the first trial was held illegally during the night. However, Jaubert suggests that the first trial happened legally during the day and that Jesus spent the following night in a Jewish prison.³³³

2nd Jewish Trial. The second or formal trial before the Sanhedrin occurred in the morning (Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1). If this second trial happened on the same day, it violated Jewish law for capital cases. After a verdict, the Jews took Jesus to Pilate.

1st Roman Trial. When Jesus was delivered to Pilate, the Jews “went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover” (Jn 18:28). Since defilement lasted seven days, this trial could have been several days before Passover. After questioning Jesus, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas where he was questioned again. Judas talked with Jewish leaders and killed himself.

According to the traditional interpretation, these events happen fairly quickly with little or no waiting. However, Jaubert suggests that Jewish leaders were dispersed after this trial. They talked with Judas who then killed himself. They stirred up the people against Jesus. Jesus spent the night in a Roman jail. That night Pilate’s wife had her dream about Jesus.³³⁴

2nd Roman Trial. Jesus appeared before Pilate a second time. Pilate calls together or assembles the Jewish leaders. Pilate's wife warned him because of her dream. Pilate releases Barabbas, pleads for Jesus, and delivers Jesus to be crucified. Jesus is mocked and scourged. He then carries his cross with help to Golgotha.

Crucifixion. According to Mark, Jesus is nailed to the cross at 9:00 AM ("third hour," Mk 15:25). According to John, Jesus was still with Pilate at noon ("sixth hour," Jn 19:14). Jesus died about 3:00 PM ("ninth hour," Mt 27:46).

Some scholars accept John's account and say "Jesus was condemned by Pilate and sent away to crucifixion at about midday" (¶614). However, many scholars believe the crucifixion began at the "third hour" (9:00 AM) as Mark indicates. Some of these scholars suggest that John's "sixth hour" was based on the Roman day which started at midnight.³³⁵ Some say Mark's "third hour" (9:00 AM) cannot be reconciled with John's "sixth hour."³³⁶ Other's suggest that the "sixth hour" was a scribal error because Epiphanius "asserts that 'certain copies' of St. John's Gospel have altered the sign which stands for the figure 3 (gamma) into the sign standing for the figure 6 (zeta). ... This was known, he states, to Clement, Origen and Eusebius Pamphilus. ... Eusebius of Caesarea ... confirms Epiphanius."³³⁷ Also "the *Didascalia* ... says that Jesus remained six hours on the cross."³³⁸

Implications. If the crucifixion began at 9:00 AM and sunrise was about 6:30 AM, what happened during those 2.5 hours on Friday? The answers depend on when the Last Supper occurred.

































1. **Thursday.** Jewish and Roman leaders must have been awake very early and waiting. The Sanhedrin met very early and rendered a quick verdict. The two Roman trials happened very quickly with little or no waiting. Jesus is mocked and scourged. He carries his cross and then is nailed to it. The three extra hours implied by John's "sixth hour" would make these three trials and related events less rushed.
2. **Tuesday.** Only the second Roman trial and the crucifixion events need to happen during the 2.5 hours Friday morning.




3. **Wednesday.** If the first Jewish trial occurred during the night, Friday morning could be the same as if the Last Supper was on Tuesday night. However, if the first Jewish trial occurred legally during the day and the second Jewish trial occurred legally the next day, Friday morning would be the same as if the Last Supper was Thursday night.

Summary

Table 34 shows how the other related puzzle pieces fit into the last week. The first Thursday Last Supper option puts the “after two days” prophecy on Tuesday and the Triumphal Entry on Sunday (9 Nisan). The second Thursday Last Supper option puts the Triumphal Entry on Monday (10 Nisan) and the “after two days” prophecy on Wednesday.³³⁹ The Tuesday Last Supper option is based on the Qumran calendar of the Essenes.³⁴⁰ The Wednesday Last Supper option assumes the day starts at sunrise and the month begins based on the same criteria used with the Egyptian sunrise calendar. The two Wednesday Last Supper options have only one extra trial day and differ as to when the two Jewish trials occur. A third Wednesday Last Supper option (not shown) moves the traditional Thursday events to Wednesday and the Friday events (e.g., crucifixion) to Thursday based on the assumption that “three days and three nights” (Mt 12:40; JST Mk 8:12) or “for the space of three days” (Hel 14:27; 3 Ne 8:3) means at least part of three days and nights.³⁴¹

Table 34: Last Week: Possible Dates

*	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F		
Thurs	9-Nis	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis		
Pharisee	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis		
Sunrise¹	9-	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	
Sunday entry	⊙ [?] 				⊙ [?] ??	??	⓪	J 
				aft-2			prep	J  R ^R  †
Monday entry	⊙						⓪	J 
					aft-2		prep	J  R ^R  †
Wed	9-Nis	10-Nis	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis		
Sunrise²	10-	11-Nis	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16-Nis	
1	⊙ [?] 				⊙ [?]	⓪	J 	J 
				aft-2		prep		R ^R  †
2	⊙ [?] 				⊙ [?]	⓪	J 	
				aft-2		prep	J  R 	R  †
Tues	12-Nis	13-Nis	14-Nis	15-Nis	16-Nis	17-Nis		
Qumran	⊙ 				⓪	J 	J 	
			aft-2	prep			R 	R  †

* ⊙= supper at Simon's, ⓪= Last Supper, †= crucifixion,
aft-2 = "after two days" prophecy, prep = preparation for Last Supper,
= temple, = Triumphal Entry, = trial (J=Jewish, R=Roman).

Observations

- Triumphal Entry.** Many scholars put the Triumphal Entry during the day time on Sunday and it has become known as Palm Sunday. If Jesus rode into Jerusalem on 10 Nisan, he did it on the same day Israelites were commanded to the paschal lamb for Passover. According to the official Jewish calendar, 10 Nisan went from Sunday evening to Monday at sunset. Also, "six days before the passover" refers to 9 Nisan and therefore the next sunset-day would be 10 Nisan

- or Monday. Therefore, some scholars put the Triumphal Entry on Monday (10 Nisan). Only the “Pharisees” (1c) and “sunrise” (1d) harmonizations put the Triumphal Entry on Sunday, 10 Nisan, and the crucifixion on Friday afternoon.
2. **“After two days”** Unless the Qumran option moves all the traditional Sunday to Tuesday events up one day, the after two day prophecy and preparations for the Last Supper occur when Jesus is at the Temple. If the “after two days” prophecy was on Tuesday afternoon, the Last Supper would be on Wednesday evening (sunrise-days) or on Tuesday evening (sunset-days). Chronologies that put the prophecy on Tuesday afternoon and the Last Supper on Thursday evening. This implies that “after two days” is longer than “after three days” which specified time between the crucifixion and the resurrection. This inconsistency seems to be ignored.
 3. **Time for the Trials.** Most scholars believe the events between the Last Supper and the crucifixion can fit in 14 hours and that 2.5 hours is enough time for the 2nd Jewish trial, two Roman trials, and the preparation for crucifixion. However, some believe this short time requires the cast (e.g., high priests, Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, soldiers) to be up very early (or all night) and ready for their part in a rushed 2.5 hour ‘play.’
 4. **Silent Wednesday.** Only the first Thursday Last Supper option (“Sunday entry”) has no events on Wednesday. For the others, Wednesday is the second temple day, preparation for the Last Supper, or a trial day.

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Note: LDS publications and LDS author surnames are in bold.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text, bibliography, or endnotes.

- ¶ Refers to numbered paragraphs in *HBC*⁹⁸.
- Ant* JOSEPHUS, *The Judean Antiquities*. (or *The Jewish Antiquities* or *The Antiquities of the Jews*)
- ANF* ROBERTS, Alexander and James DONALDSON, eds, *The Anti-Nicene Fathers*, (10 vols., 1885–96).
- CALC* HOEHNER, Harold W. 1977. *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.
- CKC* *Chronos, Kairos, Christos*, edited by Jerry VARDAMAN and Edwin M. YAMAUCHI, 1989.
- CKC2* *Chronos, Kairos, Christos II*, edited by E. Jerry VARDAMAN, 1998. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press.
- HBC*⁶⁴ FINEGAN, Jack. 1964. *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- HBC*⁹⁸ FINEGAN, Jack. 1998 rev. ed. *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*.
- Jub* *Jubilees*, (A rewriting of Genesis and Exodus, 160–150 BC. ¶95)
- LTJC* **HOLZAPFEL**, Richard Neitzel and Thomas A. **WAYMENT**. 2003–2006. *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, 3 volumes. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company.
- PDC* **PRATT**, John P. 2002. *Divine Calendars, Astronomical Witnesses of Sacred Events*.
- War* JOSEPHUS, *The Judean War* (or *The Jewish War* or *The War of the Jews*)
- Note: The works of Josephus are available online at pace.cns.yorku.ca/York/york/texts.htm.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Hall 1992, 62.

² Rose, Christine. 2005. *Genealogical Proof Standard*, 1–11.

³ Charles F. Deems, *The Light of the Nations*, 28 appended note; quoted in Talmage 1915, 109, chap. 8, n. 6 [p. 103].

⁴ Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention only one Passover but seem to imply a second one. John mentions three Passovers and implies a fourth. (HBC₉₈, ¶597–¶600).

⁵ Filmer 1966, 283–298.

⁶ Barnes 1968, 204–209.

⁷ Brown, R. 1977/1993, 166–7.

⁸ Brown, R., 1977/1993, 607.

⁹ After the birth of Jesus, all dates in the footnotes correspond to the year in the text, e.g., the 34th year has AD 34 in the footnotes.

¹⁰ Ogden and Skinner 2006, 773, 458; Pratt, J. 1985a, §3.2, *PDC* 12; Spackman 1993, 52, 61; Talmage 1915, 722 [p. 671].

¹¹ Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, 112; Wayment 2005, *LTJC* 1:393.

¹² Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 381–382.

¹³ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:64.

¹⁴ Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:337.

¹⁵ Talmage 1915, 104 [p. 98].

¹⁶ Smith and Sjodahl, see note on D&C 20:1 in 1923 and revised edition.

¹⁷ Smith and Sjodahl, see note on D&C 20:1 in 1923 edition.

¹⁸ Clark 1974, vi–vii.

¹⁹ McConkie 1958 or 1966, see “Christmas.”

²⁰ McConkie 1965, I:91.

²¹ President N. Eldon Tanner, “Resurrection and Restoration,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1971, 2.

²² Harold B. Lee, “Strengthen the Stakes of Zion,” *Ensign*, July 1973, 2 (General Conference).

²³ President Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1975, 4.

²⁴ McConkie 1979, 1:349–350.

²⁵ Spencer W. Kimball, “Remarks and Dedication of the Fayette, New York, Buildings,” *Ensign*, May 1980, 54 (General Conference).

²⁶ Elder Neal A. Maxwell, “A Choice Seer,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1986, 6.

²⁷ Elder Richard G. Scott, “Jesus Christ, Our Redeemer,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 53.

²⁸ President Gordon B. Hinckley, First Presidency Christmas Devotional, 7 December 1997, “News of the Church,” *Ensign*, Feb. 1998, p. 74.

²⁹ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 383.

³⁰ Spackman 1993, 73–74.

- ³¹ Wayment 2005, *LTJC* 1:385.
- ³² Clark 1974, vi–vii; quoted in McConkie 1979, 1:349–350.
- ³³ Clark 1974, 37.
- ³⁴ McConkie 1979, 1:349–350; Ogden and Skinner 2006, 55.
- ³⁵ Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment 2006, 44, 112.
- ³⁶ Welch and Hall 2002, chart 13-1, 8-4.
- ³⁷ Talmage 1915, 104, 166 n. 3, 697 n1, 722 [98, 156 n. 3, 648 n1, 671].
- ³⁸ Pratt, O. 1872, *JD* 15:253.
- ³⁹ See “Gospels” in the LDS Bible Dictionary. Events are listed without dates.
- ⁴⁰ *Book of Mormon*, 1981, 408; 423 footnotes (1st – 34th year=[AD 34])
- ⁴¹ Talmage 1915, 104, 166 n. 3, 697 n1, 722 [98, 156 n. 3, 671].
- ⁴² McConkie 1965, 91, 838.
- ⁴³ Sperry 1968, 399 n2
- ⁴⁴ *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles*, (1978) 22; 213.
- ⁴⁵ Lefgren 1980, 11, 39, 46.
- ⁴⁶ Pratt, J. 1985a, 1985b.
- ⁴⁷ Pratt, J. 1994, 38–45.
- ⁴⁸ Pratt, O. 1872, *JD* 15:253. Elder Pratt assumed Jesus died in AD 30 and subtracted 33 years as indicated in the Book of Mormon.
- ⁴⁹ Huber 1982, 34; 33; 32. (Eclipse was in 4 BC and the Passover in 3 BC.)
- ⁵⁰ Clark 1974, 33; 37; 120.
- ⁵¹ McConkie 1979, I:350; 382; 469; IV:19.
- ⁵² Spackman 1993, 57, 61.
- ⁵³ Wayment 2005, *LTJC*, 1: 383–394.
- ⁵⁴ Holzapfel and Wayment, *LTJC* 1:94,114, 165–6 n22, 168, 176; 2:399. John born Oct. 7/6 BC (1:94), birth at Passover (1:114), John starts AD 27 (1:168, 176), John killed AD 28/29 (1:165–6 n22), crucifixion AD 30 (2:399).
- ⁵⁵ Holzapfel, Huntsman and Wayment 2006, 49, 112.
- ⁵⁶ Welch and Hall 2002, chart 13-1.
- ⁵⁷ Ogden and Skinner 2006, 55, 770–73; 549; 480, 507, 458.
- ⁵⁸ Ridges, David J. 2007. *Your Study of The New Testament Made Easier*, pt. 1, 240, 455.
- ⁵⁹ Hall 1992.
- ⁶⁰ Maier 1998, “Herod and the Infants of Bethlehem,” in *CKC2*, 177.
- ⁶¹ <http://media.huji.ac.il>
- ⁶² Some early Christian writers state that Jesus was two years old when the wise men came. (¶510) E. Jerry Vardaman and Kokkinos say Jesus was born in 12 BC and Herod died in 4 BC. (¶543)
- ⁶³ Josephus’ works are also called *Antiquities of the Jews* or *Jewish Antiquities*, and *War of the Jews* or *The Jewish War*.
- ⁶⁴ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 376.
- ⁶⁵ Mosley 1980, 6; *HBC*’98 ¶504, table 142.
- ⁶⁶ www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/astronomy.html?n=110

- ⁶⁷ Humphreys and Waddington 1989, *CKC* 177.
- ⁶⁸ Filmer 1966, 284; Pratt, J. 1990, §2.5, *PDC* 37–38.
- ⁶⁹ Humphreys and Waddington 1989, 177.
- ⁷⁰ ¶515; Martin 1996, 119–137.
- ⁷¹ ¶515; Martin 1996, 119–137; Martin 1980, 29–33.
- ⁷² Martin 1980, 29–33.
- ⁷³ Johnson 1981b, 22. (Johnson assumed the events would take only 28 days if he allowed only 2 days for the trip and burial. However, Martin allowed 25 days, not the 28 Johnson assumed.) See also Johnson 1989, *CKC*, 99.
- ⁷⁴ “With royal Jewish funerals, the official time of mourning for the general public was thirty days (called a *Sheloshim*) ...” (Martin 1996, 131) “There were two types of mourning periods that were accomplished at the death of a king. ... The first was a public mourning period of thirty days begun immediately *after the death* of an important person (Num. 20:29; Deut 34:8). There was also a further seven day mourning period for the close relatives which took place *after the burial* (Num 19:14).” (Martin 1996, 132)
- ⁷⁵ Johnson 1989, *CKC*, 96–99.
- ⁷⁶ “Martin ... says, ‘The twenty-five or so days it required to carry the bier to the Herodian would have taken up most of *Sheloshim*.’ Rather, *sheloshim* is a thirty-day period of mourning for the dead observed by Jews, containing an initial seven-day period called *shivah*, ‘counted from the time of the burial’ — no death. ... [However,] ‘if the *shivah* had been completed, then the incoming festival canceled the entire *sheloshim* period.’” (Johnson 1989, *CKC*, 99)
- ⁷⁷ *War* 2.1.2
- ⁷⁸ “Because ... Archelaus resumed his normal duties as king *before* the start of the Passover season, this proves conclusively that both the *Sheloshim* (*thirty days*) mourning period and the personal and private mourning period of seven days were fully completed before Passover.” (Martin 1996, 135) During *sheloshim*, the bereaved were not to wear new or festive clothes, participate in festivities or go to entertainments. (EJ- *Sheloshim*) “When [Archelaus] had mourned for his father seven days, and had given a very expensive funeral feast to the multitude, ... he put on a white garment, and went up to the temple, where the people accosted him with various acclamations.” (Josephus, *War* 2.1 [2.1.1]) Putting on a white garment and giving an expensive fest indicates that *Sheloshim* was completed.
- ⁷⁹ ¶515; Martin 1996, 119–137. Martin 1980, 29–33.
- ⁸⁰ Johnson assumed Martin had used 28 days for the procession instead of 25. He incorrectly concluded that if he used only 2 days, that would leave 28 days. (Johnson 1981b, 22) As the table shows, the events would require 31 days, not 28.
- ⁸¹ Martin 1980, 34–41.
- ⁸² See articles in the bibliography for each author.
- ⁸³ Johnson 1981b, 23.

⁸⁴ A Jewish tractate (c. AD 70) includes “two semi-festival days when no mourning is permitted. These days are Chislew 7 ... or Shebat 2. ... At the point of Chislew 7 a Jewish commentator, probably of the seventh century, ... [wrote] ‘on that day Herod died.’” (§506); “According to Jewish tradition these holidays ... commemorated the death of Herod and the death of Jannai, both kings who had died within recent memory and whom the Jews hated. Now 7 Kislev, which the Jewish commentator actually preferred to associate with Herod, fell earlier in the year than [the 4 BC and 1 BC] lunar eclipses, and ... it must be ruled out. But 2 Shebat ... occurred fifteen days after each of the eclipses in 1 BC.” (Filmer 1966, 285)

⁸⁵ Barnes 1968, 209; Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 378.

⁸⁶ Maier 1989, “The Date of the Nativity ...,” *CKC* 117–8.

⁸⁷ Filmer 1966, 285.

⁸⁸ Johnson 1989, *CKC*, 94.

⁸⁹ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1983, 255.

⁹⁰ Filmer 1966, 298.

⁹¹ Barnes 1968, 205.

⁹² Beyer 1998, *CKC2*, 87, 93.

⁹³ Steinmann 2006, 16.

⁹⁴ Barnes 1968, 206.

⁹⁵ Martin 1996, 237–8.

⁹⁶ Pratt, J. 1990, §3.4, *PDC*, 40.

⁹⁷ Thiele 1951, 285.

⁹⁸ Martin 1996, 221–222.

⁹⁹ Barnes 1968, 206.

¹⁰⁰ Martin 1996, 222–225.

¹⁰¹ ¶517; see also Thiele 1951, 35–36.

¹⁰² Martin 1996, 222–225.

¹⁰³ Maier 1989, “The Date of the Nativity ...,” *CKC*, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Pratt, J. 1990, §3.5, *PDC* 40.

¹⁰⁵ *Ant* XVII.ix.5; *Dio* lv.9.18-20; Barnes 1968, 208.

¹⁰⁶ Barnes 1968, 208–9.

¹⁰⁷ Mosley and Martin 1980, 6.

¹⁰⁸ Pratt, J. 1990, §3.2, *PDC* 39.

¹⁰⁹ Edwards 1982, 30.

¹¹⁰ Steinmann 2006, 6; Filmer 1966, 285.

¹¹¹ Steinmann 2006, 5–6.

¹¹² Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:281 n. 3.

¹¹³ Filmer 1966, 295.

¹¹⁴ Filmer 1966, 288.

¹¹⁵ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:326–327, n. 165.

¹¹⁶ Filmer 1966, 286–7.

¹¹⁷ Steinman 2006, 8–9.

¹¹⁸ Filmer 1966, 286.

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- ¹¹⁹ Qadesh La Yahweh. 1995. *The Sabbath and Jubilee Cycle*, 6.
- ¹²⁰ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:285–286, n. 11.
- ¹²¹ Hoehner 1989, *CKC* 103.
- ¹²² Martin 1996, 206–207.
- ¹²³ Steinmann 2006, 8.
- ¹²⁴ Thiele 1951, 20.
- ¹²⁵ Thiele says Judah shifted from an accession to a non-accession system. (Thiele 1951, 197–201, 281) However, Morgenstern says a shift from Tishri to Nisan reckoning for the beginning of the regnal year would have had the same result. (Morgenstern 1948, 408)
- ¹²⁶ Thiele 1951, 30–33, 37, 40–41, 281.
- ¹²⁷ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:326–327, n. 165.
- ¹²⁸ Filmer 1966, 291–292.
- ¹²⁹ Filmer 1966, 294–56.
- ¹³⁰ Filmer 1966, 291–292.
- ¹³¹ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:285–286, n. 11.
- ¹³² Steinmann 2006, 8; Filmer 1966, 287.
- ¹³³ Filmer 1966, 291–292.
- ¹³⁴ Bernegger 1983, 529–530.
- ¹³⁵ Steinmann 2006, 19–22.
- ¹³⁶ Steinmann 2006, 8.
- ¹³⁷ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:326–327, n. 165.
- ¹³⁸ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, 292, n. 12; Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 40.
- ¹³⁹ Steinmann 2006, 19–22.
- ¹⁴⁰ Filmer 1966, 284–285, 293; Steinmann 2006, 4–21. (He uses Tishri accession.)
- ¹⁴¹ See Mishnah section in Chapter 7.
- ¹⁴² Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, I:326–327, n. 165.
- ¹⁴³ Filmer 1966, 284–285, 293; Steinmann 2006, 4–21. (He uses Tishri accession.)
- ¹⁴⁴ See Mishnah section in Chapter 7.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Ant* 14.158 [XIV.9.2]. Josephus actually says Herod was “fifteen years of age” but scholars on both sides agree this was a mistake. See Barnes 1968, 209 and Filmer 1966, 293.
- ¹⁴⁶ Barnes 1968, 209.
- ¹⁴⁷ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, 407–427.
- ¹⁴⁸ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 13–22.
- ¹⁴⁹ ¶522; Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 20.
- ¹⁵⁰ ¶519, table 146; ¶522, table 147.
- ¹⁵¹ Maier 1989, 114.
- ¹⁵² Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 21–22.
- ¹⁵³ Maier 1989, 115.
- ¹⁵⁴ Pratt, J. 1990, §2.3, *PDC* 37.
- ¹⁵⁵ Pratt, J. 1990, §4.2, *PDC* 41–42.

- ¹⁵⁶ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 379.
- ¹⁵⁷ Martin 1996, 82–87.
- ¹⁵⁸ Pratt, J. 1990, §4.3–4, *PDC* 42–43.
- ¹⁵⁹ Martin 1996, 82–87.
- ¹⁶⁰ Talmage 1915, 104 [98].
- ¹⁶¹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 43.
- ¹⁶² Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 37, 31–32.
- ¹⁶³ Brown, R. 1977/1993, 607.
- ¹⁶⁴ Maier 1989, 121–2.
- ¹⁶⁵ Martin 1980, 60.
- ¹⁶⁶ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 40; Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, 292 n. 12.
- ¹⁶⁷ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 40–41.
- ¹⁶⁸ Schürer, Vermes and Millar 1973, 292 n. 12.
- ¹⁶⁹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 42–43.
- ¹⁷⁰ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 97–98.
- ¹⁷¹ See “Omer” in *Encyclopedia Judaica*.
- ¹⁷² Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 71.
- ¹⁷³ Mt 16:21; 17:23; 20:19; 27:64; Mk 9:31; 10:34; Lk 9:22; 18:33; 24:7, 21, 46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4.
- ¹⁷⁴ Mk 8:31; Jn 2:19; 2 Ne 25:13; Hel 14:20. Other New Testament (e.g., Mt 26:61; 27:40, 63; Mk 14:58; 15:29; Jn 2:19, 20) references to resurrection in “three days” are by accusers.
- ¹⁷⁵ See “Circumcision” in *Encyclopedia Judaica* under “Laws”.
- ¹⁷⁶ Kloner 1999, 29. Circumcision should be “performed on the eighth day after the child’s birth (i.e., if a child was born on a Saturday, the circumcision is held on the following Saturday).” (Himmelstein 1990, 143.)
- ¹⁷⁷ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 74.
- ¹⁷⁸ Cummings, David B. 2007. “Three Days and Three Nights,” in the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 16:1, 60, 62–63.
- ¹⁷⁹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 68–69.
- ¹⁸⁰ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 68–69.
- ¹⁸¹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 69–70.
- ¹⁸² Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 65–66.
- ¹⁸³ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 97–98.
- ¹⁸⁴ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 99; See also HBC₉₈ ¶71–76.
- ¹⁸⁵ Parker and Dubberstein 1942, 1–2.
- ¹⁸⁶ Depuydt 2002, 466–467.
- ¹⁸⁷ Depuydt 2002, 467, 469, 470.
- ¹⁸⁸ Depuydt 2002, 472–473.
- ¹⁸⁹ Depuydt 2002, 476–477.
- ¹⁹⁰ Depuydt 2002, 477–478.
- ¹⁹¹ Brown, R. 1994, 2:1370.
- ¹⁹² Edersheim, 1:135, 187,278; 2:364.

- ¹⁹³ See “Bible: New Testament Chronology,” *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition, 1910, 891.
- ¹⁹⁴ Eusebius 3:7; see also Talmud, *Yoma* 39, *Aboda Zara* 8b, *Sabb.* 15a.
- ¹⁹⁵ Faulstich 1998, *CKC2*, 106.
- ¹⁹⁶ Maier, “Sejanus ...”, 13.
- ¹⁹⁷ “Acts of Pilate,” in Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, I:450.
- ¹⁹⁸ Maier, “Sejanus ...”, 13.
- ¹⁹⁹ Humphreys and Waddington 1989, *CKC* 172–177.
- ²⁰⁰ Brown, R. 1994, 2:1376.
- ²⁰¹ Maier, “The Date of the Nativity ...,” *CKC*, 125–6.
- ²⁰² Maier 1968, 13 n. 45.
- ²⁰³ Sorenson 1990, 462.
- ²⁰⁴ Pratt, O. 1872, *JD* 15:259–261; Sorenson 1990, 461, 462; Lefgren, 48; Pratt, J. 1985a, §3.2, *PDC* 12; Pratt, J. 1994, §7.0, *PDC* 61; Spackman 1993, 52, 61. Some interpret this verse as meaning that Jesus lived “almost exactly 34 years” (Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment, 112).
- ²⁰⁵ Sorenson 1990, 462.
- ²⁰⁶ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 382.
- ²⁰⁷ Sorenson 1990, 449.
- ²⁰⁸ Sorenson 1990, 450.
- ²⁰⁹ Sorenson 1985, 272–3.
- ²¹⁰ ¶105–109; Pratt, J. 2000a, in *PDC* 80–81.
- ²¹¹ Morgenstern 1955, 67–68.
- ²¹² Sorenson 1985, 272–3.
- ²¹³ “I have also recognized in your memoir on the division of time among the Mexican nations, compared with those of Asia, some very striking analogies between the Toltec characters and institutions observed on the banks of the Nile [in Egypt]. Among these analogies there is one which is worthy of attention. It is the use of the vague year of *three hundred and sixty-five days*, composed of equal months, and of five complementary days, equally employed at Thebes [Egypt] and Mexico, a distance of three thousand leagues.” (Jomard, quoted in Delafield 1839, 52, 53)
- ²¹⁴ Morgenstern 1964, 111–14.
- ²¹⁵ Pratt, J. 2004, §1.1.
- ²¹⁶ Morgenstern 1955, 67–68; The temple was used to determine the autumnal equinox and when to add an extra day. (p. 73).
- ²¹⁷ Sorenson 1990, 452–3, 462.
- ²¹⁸ Pratt, O. 1872, *JD* 15:259–261.
- ²¹⁹ Lefgren 1980, 49–52.
- ²²⁰ Pratt, J. 1994.
- ²²¹ Spackman, 48, 55. 1993 or 1998??
- ²²² Huber 1982, 25–26.
- ²²³ Filmer 1966, 285.
- ²²⁴ Maier 1989, *CKC*, 117–8.

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- ²²⁵ Sorenson 1990, 453.
- ²²⁶ Sorenson 1990, 461.
- ²²⁷ Sorenson 1985, 271–2.
- ²²⁸ Wayment 2005, *LTJC* 1:385, 387, 393–4.
- ²²⁹ Holzapfel, Huntsman, and Wayment 2006, 112.
- ²³⁰ Brown, Griggs, and Hansen 1982, 377, 381–382.
- ²³¹ Nyman 2003, 20–21.
- ²³² Ludlow 1976, 89.
- ²³³ Sperry 1968, 95, 97.
- ²³⁴ Spackman 1993, 28.
- ²³⁵ Huber 1982, 13, 25.
- ²³⁶ Sorensen, 1985, 270–3.
- ²³⁷ Sorenson 1990, 453.
- ²³⁸ Sorenson 1990, 445, 452–3, 462.
- ²³⁹ Spackman 1993, 11–12, 15, 29–31, 71.
- ²⁴⁰ Sorenson 1993, 209–212.
- ²⁴¹ Reynolds and Sjodahl 1955, 1:70.
- ²⁴² Allen 1989, 23; Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.0, *PDC* 86.
- ²⁴³ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.0, *PDC*, 86.
- ²⁴⁴ Pratt, J. 200b, §2.0, *PDC*, 86.
- ²⁴⁵ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.0, *PDC*, 87; See also Allen 1989, 22–25.
- ²⁴⁶ Clarke 1811, 2:566.
- ²⁴⁷ Honeyman 1948, 13–25.
- ²⁴⁸ Jeremiah 20:1–6; “Hanam the seer was put into the same kind of stocks as Jeremiah by King Asa (2 Chr. 16:10—where the phrase is ‘house of stocks’ = prison). Jeremiah may then have been placed in a prison (LXX: *katarraktēn* ‘trapdoor, dungeon’), and if so would not have been exposed to public view. This incident is probably to be dated prior to 605, for in that year Jeremiah was debarred from the Temple (36:5).” (Jack R. Lundbom, *Anchor Bible — Jeremiah 1–20*, 846–847, 850).
- ²⁴⁹ Seely and Seely 2004, 364.
- ²⁵⁰ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.1.
- ²⁵¹ “This event must have taken place ... soon after the battle of Carchemish. ...” In Daniel, the ‘third’ year refers to Tishri (Sept/Oct) years while Jeremiah uses Nisan (Mar/Apr) years. (¶433). Di Lella disagrees. “The ‘third’ year here in Dan 1:1 is hard to account for. ... It seems simpler to think that our author merely followed and earlier folk legend without being concerned about the accuracy of the date. The legend may have gotten the ‘third’ year ... from II Kings 24:1 (‘ ... Jehoiakim became his servant three years. ...), even though this really refers to events that happened some time after the battle of Carchemish (605 BC).” (Di Lella, *Anchor Bible— Daniel*, 129)
- ²⁵² Wiseman 1985, 4, 21.

²⁵³ Some scholars believe Jehoiakim might not have become a servant until 601 BC. Josephus said that in 605/604 BC “the king of Babylon ... took all of Syria ... excepting Judea.” Four years later [601 BC] Nebuchadnezzar “made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim.” (*Ant* 10.6.1); “Jehoiakim had evidently become vassal to Nebuchadnezzar when the new king of Babylon overran Syria, either in the year after Carchemish, i.e., 604 BC (in which case Jehoiakim’s rebellion took place in 601 BC) or else in 601 BC (in which case the rebellion took place *ca.* 598 BC). In the first case we must assume that various robber bands [2 Kgs 24:2] were acting under Babylonian authority and with Nebuchadnezzar’s encouragement in order to keep Jehoiakim busy until Nebuchadnezzar himself was free to deal with the situation. It is more likely that Jehoiakim was free from any outside domination till 601 BC. Nebuchadnezzar was too busy elsewhere.” (*Interpreter’s Bible*, 3:329; 6:361)

²⁵⁴ Josephus, *Antiquities*, 10.88 [10.6.2]

²⁵⁵ Wiseman 1961, 29, 30; Josephus said that in the fourth year of Nebuchadnezzar (601 BC) “the king of Babylon made an expedition with mighty forces against the Jews, and required tribute of Jehoiakim, and threatened upon his refusal to make war against him.” (*Ant* 10.1 [10.6.1])

²⁵⁶ Seely and Seely 2004, 368–370. See also next footnote.

²⁵⁷ Pratt, J. 1994, 45, fn 7; Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.2.

²⁵⁸ ¶436; Josephus also said Nebuchadnezzar made Jehoiachin king.

²⁵⁹ See “Jehoiachin” in the *LDS Bible Dictionary*.

²⁶⁰ Wiseman 1961, 33.

²⁶¹ Jeremiah said 3,023 were taken captive in 598/7 BC, the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, just before Jehoiachin and Zedekiah became kings (Jer 52:28). Was Jeremiah referring to the captives taken when Jehoiachin became king, when Zedekiah became king, or both? (¶444)

²⁶² Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.3.

²⁶³ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.3.

²⁶⁴ “That Zedekiah is indicated is made clear from the context in the next two chapters. Other translations simply translate the name as ‘Zedekiah.’ Even if this is simply a copyist’s mistake, it seems easier to explain if Jehoiakim had also been called Zedekiah.” (Pratt, J. 2000b, fn. 23, *PDC*, 90.)

²⁶⁵ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.4, *PDC*, 88–89.

²⁶⁶ Honeyman 1948, 13.

²⁶⁷ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.4, *PDC*, 89.

²⁶⁸ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.3, *PDC*, 88.

²⁶⁹ Sorenson 1990, 462.

²⁷⁰ Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.5, *PDC*, 89.

²⁷¹ Spackman 1993, 8.

²⁷² Spackman 1993, 30.

²⁷³ Chadwick 2005, see also note 6.

²⁷⁴ Potter 1999, 54–63.

- ²⁷⁵ Brown, S. 2002, 61.
- ²⁷⁶ Tvedtnes 2005.
- ²⁷⁷ Pratt, J. 1994, 45, fn 7; Pratt, J. 2000b, §2.2.
- ²⁷⁸ Pratt, J. 2001, Introduction.
- ²⁷⁹ Pratt, J. 2001, §1.0, *PDC*, 160.
- ²⁸⁰ ¶105–109; Pratt, J. 2000a, in *PDC*, 80–81.
- ²⁸¹ Nibley 2000, 581.
- ²⁸² *Jub* 39:6; Nibley 2000, 279.
- ²⁸³ Nibley 2000, 296.
- ²⁸⁴ Parker 1950, 31, 53–54; de Vaux 1961, 1:178–179.
- ²⁸⁵ Morgenstern 1964, 111–14; Morgenstern 1955, 64–5.
- ²⁸⁶ Morgenstern 1955, 37, 61, 64.
- ²⁸⁷ Morgenstern 1964, 111–4.
- ²⁸⁸ Pratt, J. 2004, §1.2.
- ²⁸⁹ Morgenstern 1964, 111–4; Morgenstern 1924, 64–5.
- ²⁹⁰ Morgenstern 1924, 75–78; de Vaux 1961, 1:182.
- ²⁹¹ Parker 1950, 10.
- ²⁹² Morgenstern 1935, 11.
- ²⁹³ Sorenson 1990, 450.
- ²⁹⁴ Pratt, J. 2001, in *PDC*, 166.
- ²⁹⁵ Driver 1965a, 327.
- ²⁹⁶ Nibley 2000, 296.
- ²⁹⁷ Nibley 2000, 293.
- ²⁹⁸ Parker 1950, 10.
- ²⁹⁹ de Vaux 1961, 1:183.
- ³⁰⁰ Parker 1950, 23. Parker considered “the beginning of the day, the names of the days of the month and their astronomical basis, the lunar calendar of Pap. Carlsberg 9, and the double dates of the late period.”; see also de Vaux 1961, 1:183.
- ³⁰¹ Parker 1950, 13.
- ³⁰² Parker 1950, 72 note 43.
- ³⁰³ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 91.
- ³⁰⁴ Edersheim, 2:357, 374; Clark 1974, 103.
- ³⁰⁵ Seely, Jo Ann 2003, *LTJC* 3:46–48.
- ³⁰⁶ Wayment 2006, *LTJC* 2:405–406.
- ³⁰⁷ Clark 1974, 111; McConkie 1979, 697.
- ³⁰⁸ Talmage 1915, chap. 29, 510–511 [pp. 475–479]; McConkie 1979, 3:331; Jaubert 1965, 101; Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 91.
- ³⁰⁹ See “Gospels” in the *LDS Bible Dictionary*, 694.
- ³¹⁰ See “Inclusive Counting” in chapter 7.
- ³¹¹ Seely, David R. 2003, *LTJC* 3:66–67.
- ³¹² ¶609–613; Seely, David R. 2003, *LTJC* 3:64–75; Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 74–90; Jeremias 1966, 15–84.
- ³¹³ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 81.

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- ³¹⁴ Jaubert 1965, 112; Driver 1965b, 330; Strack and Billerbeck, II:838–840.
³¹⁵ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 82–83; Talmage 1915, 618, chap. 28 n. 1 [p. 573 n. 1].
³¹⁶ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 83–84.
³¹⁷ de Vaux 1961, 2:485, 489.
³¹⁸ de Vaux 1961, 2:485–6.
³¹⁹ Seely, David R. 2003, *LTJC* 3:84–85.
³²⁰ Seely, David R. 2003, *LTJC* 3:73.
³²¹ Hegesippus (*ANF* 8.3.4); Eusebius quotes Hegesippus (4.22.4.22).
³²² Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 88.
³²³ Ruckstuhl 1965, 115.
³²⁴ “They must have slaughtered [the lamb] themselves at or near the place where they ate it, in accordance with the secondary priestly legislation in Ex. 12:1–11.” (Morgenstern 1955, 64–5 n.2); See also Ruckstuhl 1965, 116.
³²⁵ Ruckstuhl 1965, 116–117.
³²⁶ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 88.
³²⁷ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 90–93.
³²⁸ Jeremias 1966, 15–84.
³²⁹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 87, 90.
³³⁰ Marshall 1980, 74–75.
³³¹ Ogden and Skinner 2006, 549.
³³² Seely, David R. 2003, *LTJC* 3:74.
³³³ Jaubert 1965, see concordance table after 173.
³³⁴ Jaubert 1965, see concordance table after 173.
³³⁵ Edersheim 1983, 1.408; *Eerdman’s Handbook to the Bible* 1973, 547.
³³⁶ Jackson 2003, *LTJC* 3:325.
³³⁷ Jaubert 1965, 106–107; Ruckstuhl 1965, 46–48.
³³⁸ Jaubert 1965, 106–107.
³³⁹ Hoehner 1977, *CALC* 90–93.
³⁴⁰ Jaubert 1965, 111–113, 101.
³⁴¹ Nyman 2006, 391.