

# Messiah Is Alive

**W**hen Napoleon Bonaparte was born in France in 1769, the world did not care nor was the world looking for his birth. But in 1793, the world began to notice him after he defeated the British army at the city of Toulon, France. The victories in his famous career are now recorded in the pages of history books. The births of other men such as Greece's famous philosopher Socrates, Egypt's priest Mantheo, India's religious leader Gandhi, and China's Shi Huangdi (221-204 B.C.) of the Qin dynasty, who built the Great Wall of China were not expected. But there is one birth and one death that should have been expected because it had been predicted for about 500 years. The prophecy was not a general one. It did not predict that Messiah would just die sometime. It predicted the exact week in which He would die. The prophecy did not apply to just anyone who would die, or to just anyone who would die in Jerusalem. It applied to only one person - a Jew who would die in A.D. 33 during the week of March 27. The prophecy is found in Daniel 9:24-26a.

**MESSIAH'S DEATH PREDICTED.** The early church father Jerome indicates in his commentary on the book of Daniel that many individuals believed that Daniel 9:24-26a was a prophecy about the Messiah. He goes on to say that there were other Jews who agreed that the prophecy seemed to point to Jesus. Julius Africanus stated Phlegon as stating, "And calculation makes out that the period of seventy weeks, as noted in Daniel, is completed at this time." We will discover that this prophecy of Daniel is like a pointer that specifies a date after which the Messiah would die. In fact, the prophecy predicts the exact week of Messiah's death. No one today and no one at the time the prophecy was given could have qualified to be the Messiah. This is an incredible prophecy. Here is the first part of this incredible prophecy.<sup>1</sup>

Seventy weeks have been

decreed for your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy place. (NASB) Dan. 9:24

**SEVENTY WEEKS.** The expression "seventy weeks" has been understood since the time of Jerome to refer to "seventy weeks of years" or "seventy periods of seven years."

Today there is wide agreement among many scholars that this is the correct interpretation. This interpretation is supported by Daniel 9:2, where we are told that Daniel was reading the scroll of Jeremiah and discovered that the time was approaching for the Jewish captives to return to Palestine. We discovered in our study of Daniel 1 that Nebuchadnezzar had taken a group of Jewish captives from Palestine to Babylon in 604



Calvary - Site of Jesus' Death

1. Julius Africanus. Chronography, 18.1

B.C. Daniel 9:1-2 reveals that almost 70 years had elapsed since then, and it was about time for them to return to Palestine. God had allowed them to be deported because of the sins of their kings. The length of the deportation was determined by the number of sabbatical years that they had failed to observe (2 Chronicles 36:21; Jer. 34:12-22). God had commanded them to allow a field of land to lie dormant every seventh year (Lev. 25:4-5, 27-46). But they had failed to observe the seventy sabbath years over a 490 year period. Consequently, they were to be in captivity for that length of time - 70 years. Daniel would have understood the reference to “seventy weeks” in the prophecy to be 490 years.

Genesis 29:20-30 makes it clear that it was customary among the ancient Jewish people to refer to a “week” as a another way to refer to seven years. Genesis 29:20 tells us that Jacob served Laban for seven years in order to marry Rachel. Unfortunately, Laban was dishonest and refused to give Rachel to him on his wedding night, even though she was the one for whom he had labored. Instead Laban gave Jacob his oldest daughter Leah. Jacob did not discover the problem until the morning. If we look at verse 30, we discover that Laban offers Rachel, his younger daughter, to Jacob if he will serve another “week.” Then at the end of the verse we are told that this “week” is “seven years.” This example demonstrates that the term “week” did mean “seven years” in the proper context.

Therefore, we conclude, along with many others, ancient and modern, that the expression “seventy weeks” refers to “seventy periods of seven years” or “490 years.” Therefore, Daniel 9:24 tells us that 70 weeks or 490 years had to elapse before sin would be eliminated and everlasting righteousness would occur. That means the end of the world. We will explore this more in our next study.

**SIXTH-NINE WEEK PROPHECY.** The next three verses contain three prophecies. The first prophecy is the focus of this study. The last two will be explored in the next study.

*So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the*

*sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing . . .*  
(NASB) Dan. 9:24-26a

Here we are told that there will be sixty-nine weeks (7 weeks plus 62 weeks) from the date a decree is issued to restore and rebuild the city of Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince is cut-off and have nothing. In order to understand the meaning of the prophecy, we need to understand the date on which the decree to rebuild and restore Jerusalem was issued. Then we will explore the meaning of the seven and sixty-two weeks.

**DATE OF THE DECREE?** When was the decree given to which Daniel is referring? It is Cyrus’ decree of 538 B. C., Artaxerxes decree in 457 B.C., or Artaxerxes of 444 B.C.? There are advocates for each one. We shall consider each separately.

*Cyrus’ Decree of 538 B.C.* - The decree of 538 B.C. was issued by Cyrus, the first king of Persia. He issued the decree during his first year as king (2 Chron. 36:22-23). Most advocates for this decree admit that the decree as described in 2 Chronicles 36:22-23 does not include a directive to rebuild the city but only the temple. To believe that the city is included assumes facts not stated in the text.

Consequently, advocates refer to Isa. 44:26-28 to support their claim that the decree included the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, Isaiah 44:28 does not make it clear whether God is simply saying that Cyrus is “My shepherd” and that he would rebuild the city and the temple, or if God is simply stating a series of facts. There is ambiguity in the text.

The Isaiah 45:13 passage is probably the strongest passage supporting the concept that Cyrus’ decree included the rebuilding of the city, but the question must be asked what does “rebuild the city” mean and when was the rebuilding to occur? At first this might appear to be dancing around the issue and an attempt to avoid the obvious; but it is very clear in Nehemiah 2:11-17, which occurs later in time since Artaxerxes ruled after Cyrus (Neh. 2:1), that the city is desolate and the walls are “broken down.” The Hebrew text in Neh. 2:13 states explicitly that the walls and gates were in utter ruin. Nehemiah 2:17 is also very significant since it states that Jerusalem is desolate and the gates burned by fire.

## *Decrees Related to the Rebuilding of Jerusalem*

### Cyrus' Decree: 538 B.C.

Cyrus' decree was only for the rebuilding the temple. - [2 Chron. 36:22-23](#)

Decree to rebuild the temple is repeated in Ezra. - [Ezra 1:1-2; 6:3](#)

Cyrus' decree was ONLY for the temple. - [Ezra 5:17-6:11](#)

### Artaxerxes' Decree: 457 B.C.

Artaxerxes' decree only allowed Ezra and others to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of worship. - [Ezra 7:11-27](#)

### Artaxerxes' Decree: 444 B.C.

This decree directed that the Jerusalem be rebuilt. - [Neh. 2:5-8](#)

The Hebrew word for “is desolate” can also be translated as “to lay waste” or “to lay in ruins.” If Cyrus’ decree included rebuilding the city and the walls, why is the city in ruins during Artaxerxes reign? It is very possible that Isaiah 45:13 simply means under his kingdom Jerusalem will be rebuilt. Therefore, Cyrus’ decree is rejected.

*Artaxerxes' Decree of 457 B.C.* - Artaxerxes I reigned after Cyrus from 464 to 424 B.C. He was the sixth king. Artaxerxes’ decree of 457 B.C. as given in Ezra 7:11-27 does not refer to a rebuilding of any city but to a decree allowing Ezra and others to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of worship. Some have claimed that Ezra 9:9 indicates that the 457 B.C. decree did include the rebuilding of the city, but once again a careful examination reveals that Ezra had a thankful heart for the Persian kings allowing them to rebuild the temple.

*Artaxerxes' Decree of 444 B.C.* - Artaxerxes I issued another decree in 444 B.C. which is given in Nehemiah 2:1-8.

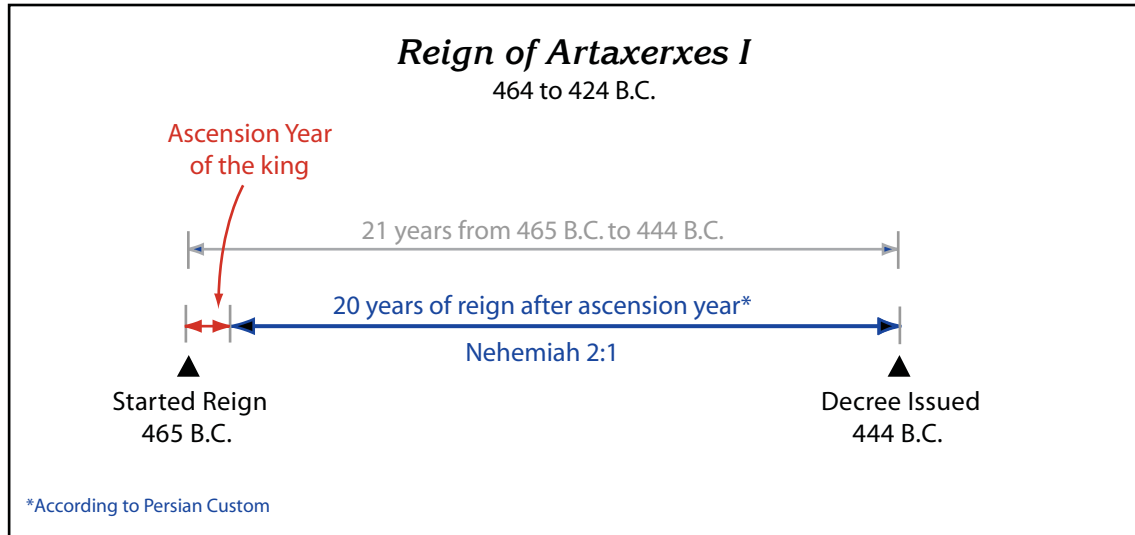
*And it came about in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes . . . And I said to the king, “If it please the king, and if your servant has found favor before you, send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.” . . . And I said to the king, “If it please the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the provinces beyond the River, that they may allow me to pass through until I come to Judah, and a letter to*

*Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress which is by the temple, for the wall of the city, and for the house to which I will go. And the king granted them to me because the good hand of my God was on me. (NASB) Neh. 2:1-8*

Only Neh. 2:1-8 and the following verses within the book of Nehemiah provide solid evidence that this decree was issued for the purpose of rebuilding the city and the walls. Notice that Nehemiah 2:17 clearly states that the city was desolate.

*Then I said to them, “You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates burned by fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach.” (NASB) Neh. 2:17*

Nehemiah 3 indicates that the Fish, Old, Valley, Refuse, Fountain, Water, Horse, East, Inspection, and Sheep gates and walls were all rebuilt. The rebuilding activity of the gates and walls are mentioned one-by-one. Nehemiah 4 describes the rebuilding of the wall and Neh. 6:15 says that the wall was finally completed. Then Neh 11:1 tells us that the rest of the people were to be brought to the city so that it could be repaired. Why would Artaxerxes issue another decree in 444 B.C. if one had already been issued in 538 B.C. or 457 B.C? This implies that the 538 B.C and 457 B.C. decrees



were not edicts to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Therefore, we must conclude that Nehemiah 2 and following chapters refer to the rebuilding of the city and the wall. In summary, Nehemiah 2:1-8 documents the decree of interest, the utter ruin of the city and dilapidated walls, and the rebuilding of the city and its walls.

**TWENTIETH YEAR OR ARTAXERXES.** What is the date of the decree that Artaxerxes issued in Nehemiah 2:1-8? To answer the question, we will start by noting that Artaxerxes started ruling Persia in 465 B.C. Since Nehemiah 2:1 indicates the time is the 20th year of Artaxerxes we might assume that the date is 445 B.C. In reality the date is 444 B.C. since the Babylonians and Medo-Persians referred to a king's first year as the ascension year (compare Daniel 1:5, 18 to Dan. 2:1) and then started counting in the second and subsequent years as the king's reign. This is contrary to our current culture. Therefore, when Ezra says the decree was issued in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes, it is actually the 21st year in which Artaxerxes ruled the Persian empire or 444 B.C. It is also important to note that when the day of the month was not mentioned, it was customary to assume the first day of the month. Therefore, Artaxerxes issued the decree that Daniel 9:25 refers to for the restoration and rebuilding of the city of Jerusalem in 1 Nisan 444 B.C.

**SEVEN AND SIXTY-NINE WEEKS.** Now that we have the date of the decree we need to know how much time is represented by the statement "seven weeks and sixty-weeks," because Daniel 9:25-26 has told us that from the "issuing

of a decree to restore and rebuild the city of Jerusalem" until "Messiah the Prince is cut-off and have nothing" is a sixty-nine week period of time.

First, note that the reader is to understand that the phrase "sixty-two weeks" in verse 26 follows the already mentioned seven weeks. Some have attributed special significance to the "seven weeks" period or 49 years, but the book of Daniel does not tell us and it only guess work to conclude otherwise. Therefore, 69 weeks has elapsed when we are told that "Messiah the Prince is cut-off and have nothing."

Second, we have already discovered from Dan. 9:24 that a "week" in this passage refers to a seven year period. Consequently, the 69 weeks refers to 483 years (69 weeks x 7 years/week).

At the end of the 483 years, the prophecy goes on to say that the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing. The Hebrew word that is translated as "cut-off" can also mean "to kill, to eliminate, or to permit to perish." The wording of the Hebrew text is also interesting. The phrase "have nothing" is actually one word that means "not." The message is clear. The Messiah will die after the 69 weeks. He will cease to exist. He will be "not." This means that the Messiah will die 483 years after the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.

**SERIOUS ABOUT SCRIPTURE.** Now it is time to count 483 years from the decree to the death of the Messiah. Hang on! This is going to be detailed, but it will be wonderful when we are finished.

## Daniel's 69 Weeks

Converts to 483 Biblical Years:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 69 \text{ weeks} \\
 \times \quad 7 \text{ years} \\
 \hline
 483 \text{ prophetic years}
 \end{array}$$

Which Equals This Many Days:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 483 \text{ prophetic years} \\
 \times \quad 360 \text{ days} \\
 \hline
 173,880 \text{ days}
 \end{array}$$

First, we must first convert these 483 years, which are biblical years, into our present twentieth century Gregorian calendar which has 365.2421896698 days per year. A biblical year contains 30 days per month or 360 days per year. This can be determined from Genesis 7:11 where we are told that the great flood that occurred during Noah's time started on the second month and the seventieth day. Genesis 8:4 tells us that the flood ended on the seventh month and the seventieth day, and Genesis 7:24 says that the flood lasted for 150 days.

Since we are told that the flood lasted for five months as well as 150 days this means that the biblical calendar contains 30 days per month or 360 days per year.

Now if we multiply 483 biblical years by 360 days per year we obtain 173,880 days. This is the number of days from the decree to the week in which Messiah would die. We had to perform this calculation in

order to convert the 483 biblical years into our calendar which is the Gregorian calendar. Now we want to determine how many Gregorian years these days represent. Since there are 365.2421896698 days in a Gregorian year we will divide the 173,880 days by 365.2421896698 and we discover that the 483 biblical years equals 476 years and 25 days in our current calendar.

Next we count 476 years and 25 days from the date of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem which is 1 Nisan

$$\frac{173,880 \text{ days}}{365.2421896698 \text{ solar days/year}} = 476 \text{ Gregorian years} + 24.717 \text{ days}$$

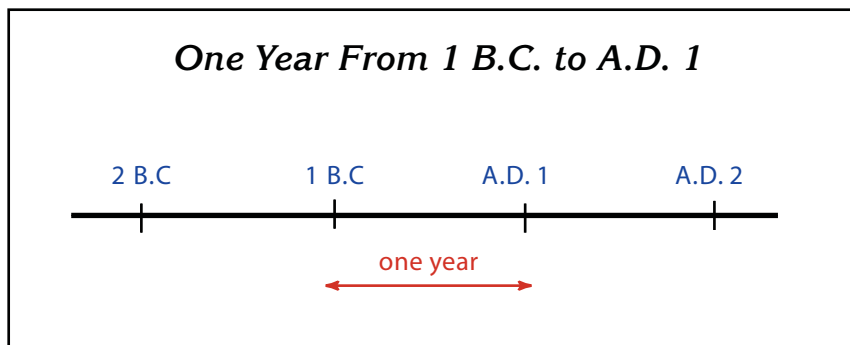
**Daniel's 69 Weeks = 476 Gregorian Years**

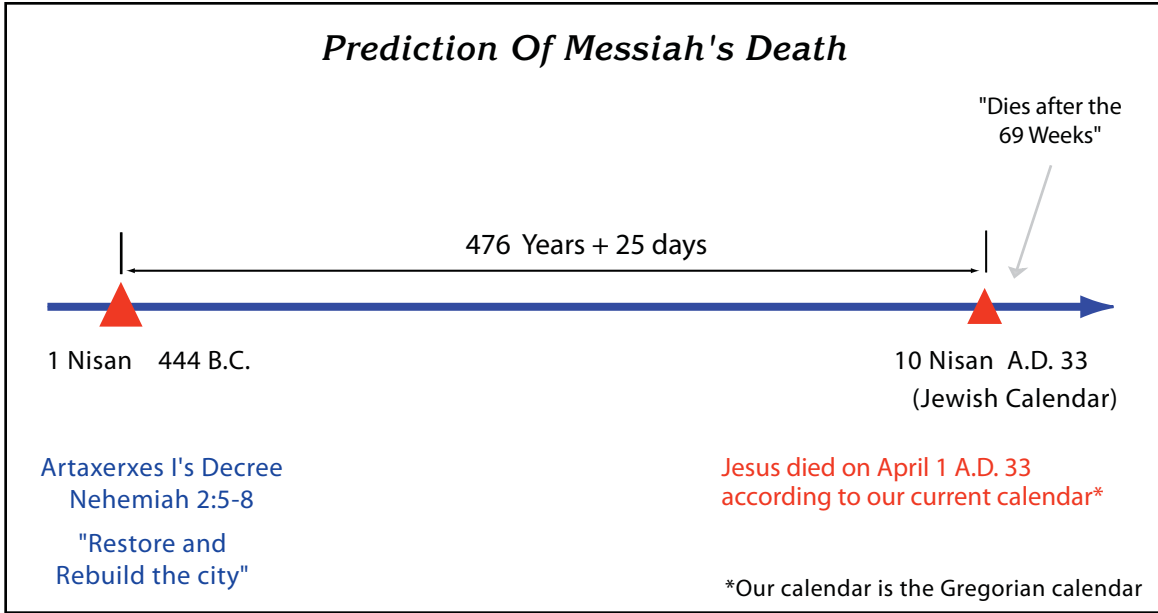
444 B.C. (or 5 March 444 B.C. in our calendar) we arrive at 10 Nisan 33 A.D (or 30 March A.D. 33). Note, that there is only one year from 1 B.C. to A.D. 1 and not two years.

This means that Daniel 9:25-26a predicts that the Messiah

was to be "cut-off" or die after 10 Nisan A.D. 33.

**WHEN DID JESUS DIE?** Now we ask, "When did Jesus Christ die?" We will start by

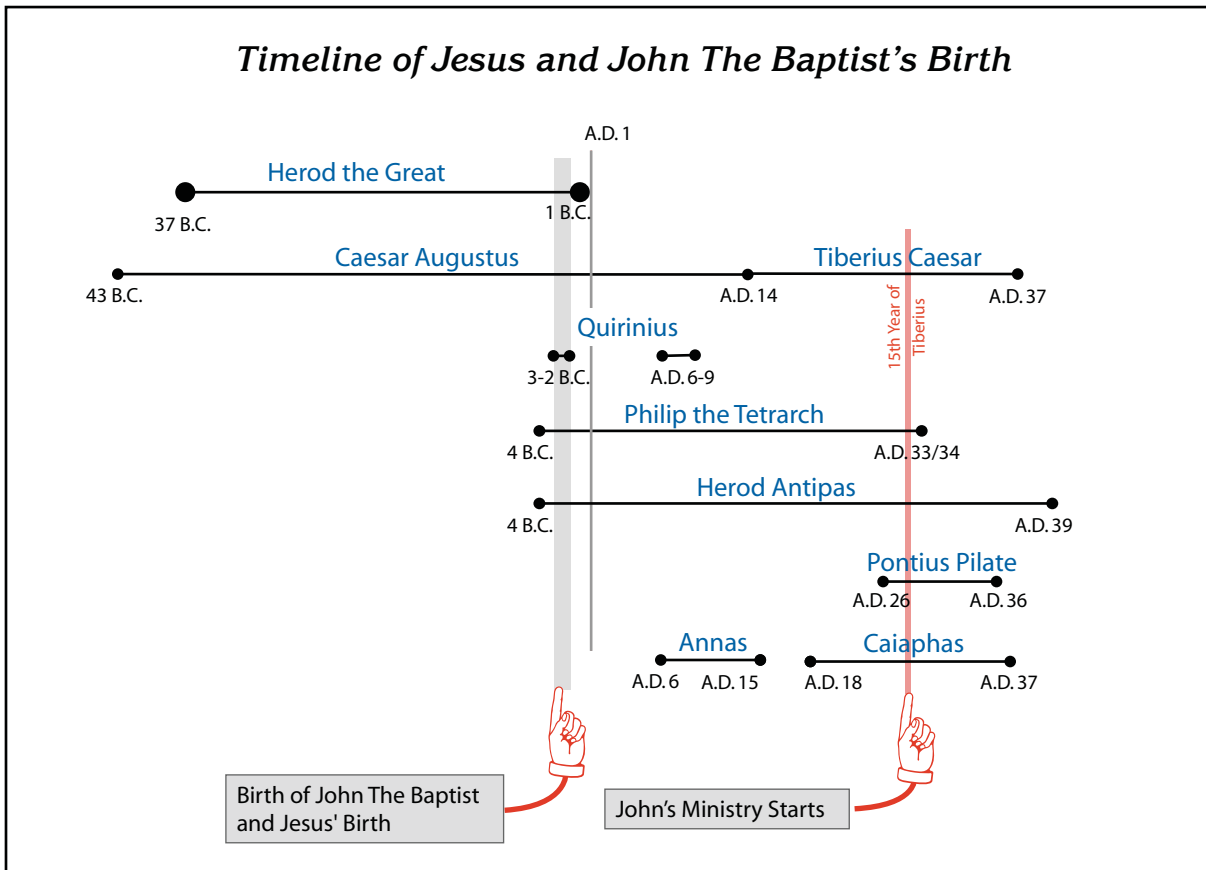




determining when He was born, then how long He lived, and finally when he died. It has been commonly believed and taught that Jesus was born in 6 B.C. or 4 B.C. But recent facts indicate that He most likely was born in 2 B.C. We derive this conclusion from historical data, the gospels,

and from the statements recorded by the early church fathers who agree that Jesus was born about 2 B.C.

Those who believe that Jesus was born in 6-4 B.C. do so because they believe that Herod the Great died in 4 B.C. Herod the Great was the king who was alive at the time



## Ancient Testimony To Jesus' Birth

### Herod the Great

- He started his reign in 1 Nisan 35 B.C.
  - He reigned 34 years
  - Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that a full lunar eclipse occurred shortly before his death
  - A total lunar eclipse occurred on 10 January 1 B.C.
  - He died in 1 B.C.
- Quirinius was governor of Syria in 3-2 B.C. (Luke 2:1-2)

### Jesus

- He was born in 3-2 B.C. according to the following historians:
  - Dionysius
  - Eusebius of Caesarea
  - Exigius
  - Hippolytus of Rome
  - Hippolytus of Thebes
  - Irenaeus
  - Josephus
  - Julius Africanus
  - Origin
  - Paulus Orosius
  - Tertullian

Therefore, Jesus was born in 3-2 B.C.

that Jesus was born. He was the one who killed the children under 2 years of age in Matthew 2. Jack Finegan has recently published a monumental book that strongly indicates Herod the Great did not die in 4 B.C. but around 1 B.C.<sup>2</sup> Herod's death occurred just after a full lunar eclipse. Josephus and astronomy support this claim. He also suggests that the governor Quirinius of Luke 2:2 reigned in 3-2 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

If we look at the reigns of other kings, governors, and the tenure of Israel's chief priests around the time Jesus lived, we discover that Jesus had to be born sometime around 3-2 B.C. Early church fathers such as Eusebius, Hippolytus of Rome, Irenaeus, Julius Africanus, Origin, and Tertullian all claimed that Jesus was born about 3-2 B.C. The Jewish historian Josephus also adds his weight to the date. Collectively, this information suggests that Jesus was born 3-2 B.C.

**HOW LONG DID JESUS LIVE?** Now how long did Jesus live after His birth? The apostle Luke helps answer the question when he tells us that Jesus started His ministry at about the age of 30 years.

*And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age . . . (NASB) Luke 3:23*

This means that Jesus could have started His ministry when

He was 29 years of age or maybe when he was 31 years of age. This gives us a range of dates for the start of His ministry from 27 A.D. to 30 A.D. (remember there is only one year from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D.). Since Jesus' ministry lasted somewhere between three to four plus years, Jesus' ministry could have lasted until He was 30 years or 34 A.D. of age.

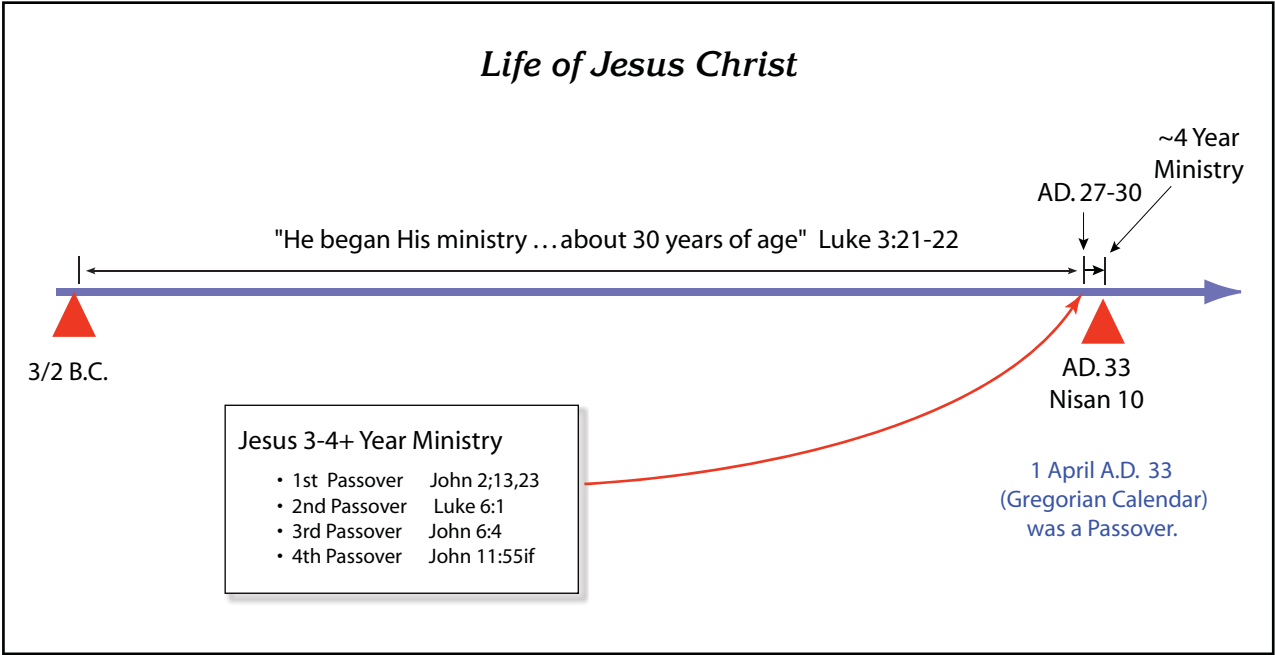
**DATE OF HIS DEATH.** Our first clue as to the time of Jesus' death comes from John 2:20 where we are told that construction on the temple had already been in process for 46 years. Since construction of the temple started in 20 B.C. that means that Jesus' ministry occurred after A.D. 27/28. Since Jesus ministered while Caiaphas was the high priest from A.D. 18 to A.D. 37 and Pontius Pilate was governor from A.D. 26 to A.D. 36 we conclude that Jesus' ministry years and His death could have occurred between A.D. 30 and A.D. 36. However, it is highly doubtful that He lived past A.D. 34 given the year of His birth and the length of His ministry.

Now on what day did Jesus die? This will help us determine the year of His death. The New Testament tells us that Jesus died on a Friday or the day of preparation for the Passover or the day before the Jewish Passover.

*When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pave-*

2. Finegan, Jack. Handbook of Biblical Chronology. Hendrickson Pub., 1998, p. 301

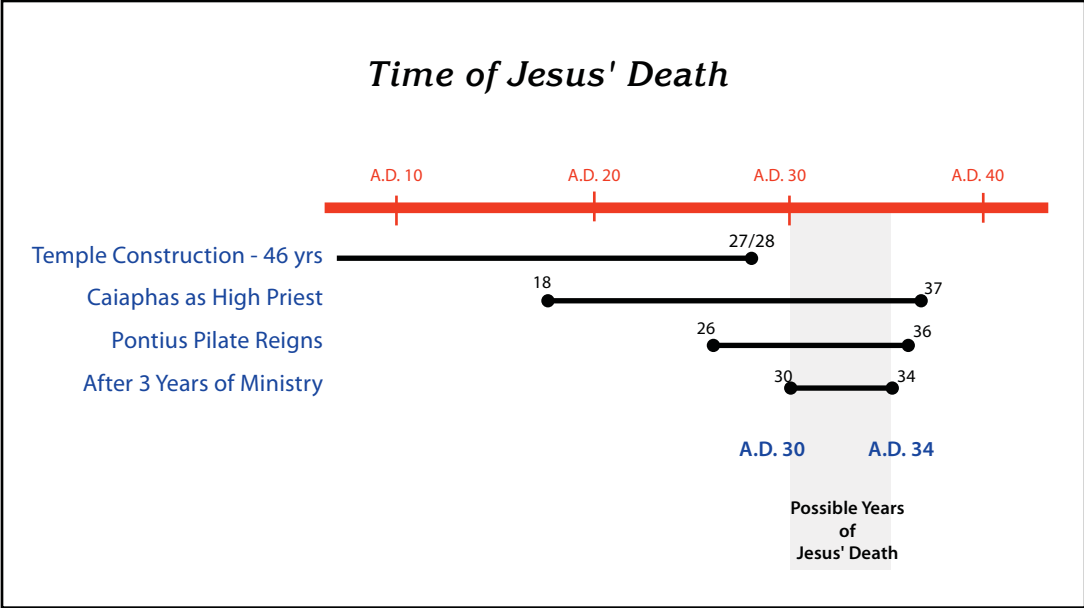
3. Ibid., p. 302-306.



ment, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold, your King!" They therefore cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." So he then delivered Him to them to be crucified. They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. (NASB) John 19:13-17

Luke 23:44-46 says that Jesus died at the sixth hour or at 3 p.m. in the afternoon. The following passage also reveals that Jesus died on the eve of the Sabbath or Friday.

And behold, a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where



no one had ever lain. And it was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. (NASB) Luke 23:50-54

That is, He died on a day before the Sabbath and on a Passover Eve. The apostle John calls this day a high day for it was both a Sabbath and the Passover.

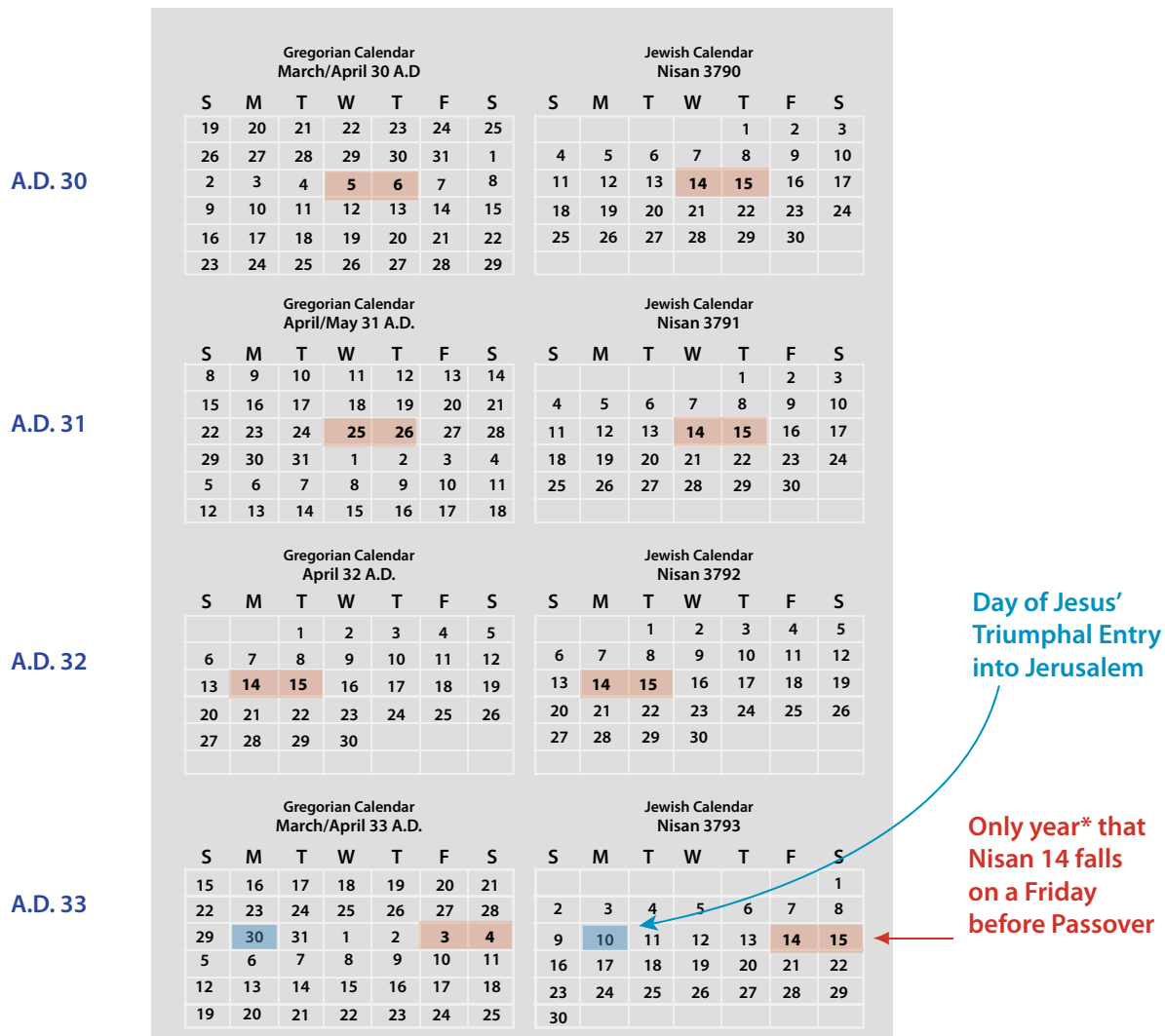
The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. (NASB) John 19:31

This means that when Jesus died, He died on the eve of Pass-

over which occurs on Nisan 14 and on a Friday afternoon before the Sabbath, which starts at 6:00 p.m. The Jewish Passover occurs on Nisan 15 and during a full moon. Thus one can verify the accuracy of the dates with astronomy.

The Jewish calendars indicate that the eve of Passover occurred during the years of A.D. 30 through A.D. 33 on a Friday in only one year - A.D. 33. This agrees with astronomy. A full moon did not occur on any Friday that was also the eve of the Passover in A.D. 30, 31, 32, 34 or 35. It is important to note that the monthly calendar for Nisan A.D. 34 and 35 are identical to that in A.D. 31 and A.D. 32, respectively. That means Nisan 14 did not occur on any Friday between A.D. 30 and A.D. 35, except in the year A.D. 33.

### In Which Year Did Jesus Die?



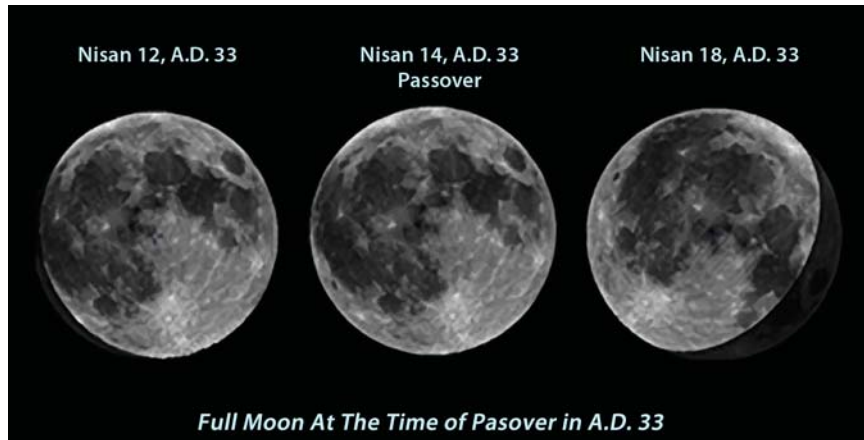
That leaves only one year in which Jesus could have died. Therefore, Jesus died on April 3, 33 A.D. in our Gregorian calendar or Nisan 14, 3793 in the Jewish calendar.

We have demonstrated that Jesus' birth and life span most likely continued until sometime between A.D. 30 and A.D. 34. Astronomy and the calendars indicate that Jesus did die on Nisan 14, A.D. 33. We have discovered that the prophecy in Daniel 9:25-26a predicted that the Messiah would die after Nisan 10, A.D. 33 and Jesus fulfills that prophecy. He died on Nisan 14, A.D. 33.

**CONCLUSION.** The prophecy of Daniel 9:26 predicted that Messiah would die after Nisan 10, A.D. 33. The Messiah had to be alive before that in order to die. No one before that week or after that week qualifies to be the Messiah - only Jesus qualifies! That was a narrow window in history in which the Messiah could arrive and Jesus came during that window. Jesus was and is the Messiah.

Daniel predicted that the Messiah would die 500 years before it happened. Other prophecies predicted that the Messiah would suffer (Isaiah 53), be pierced with a sword, be scourged, die alongside thieves, and be buried in a rich man's grave.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions . . . and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that



is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth . . . His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor

was there any deceit in His mouth. But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief . . . and was numbered with the transgressors; yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors. (NASB) Isaiah 53:5-12

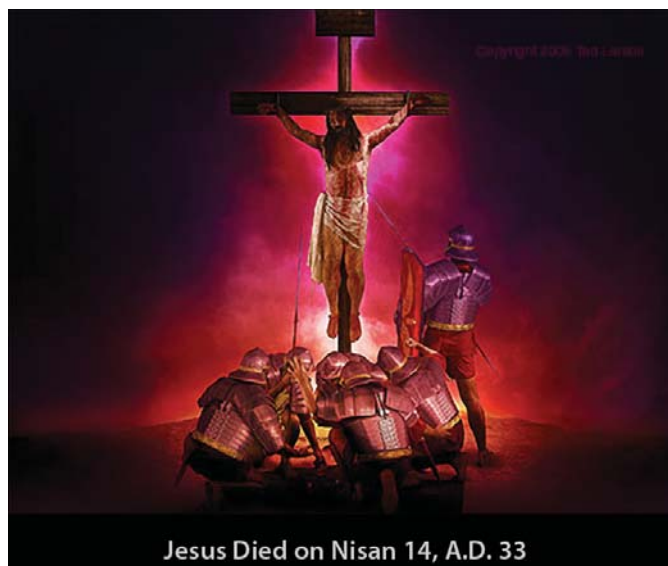
All these things happened to Jesus just as this 500 year old prophecy predicted. Why did Jesus die? He died for our sins. But that alone is not what Easter is all about. Easter is about Jesus' return to life after being dead. Another prophet predicted this almost 1,000 years before Jesus,

. . . Neither wilt Thou allow Thy Holy One to undergo decay. (NASB) Ps. 16:10

Jesus was and is the Messiah

One Easter, the pastor Dr. Gordon, brought an old rusty birdcage

and sat it next to the pulpit. As he started his sermon that Easter morning, he held up the bird cage and said, "You might be wondering why this is here. It is not normal to have a bird cage here. Let me tell you the story behind it. Several days ago I was watching a little boy in tattered and torn blue jeans with a dirty T-shirt, cap off to the side, whistling, walking down an alley, and swinging this bird



cage. Clinging to the bottom of the cage were little field sparrows he had caught. So I stopped him and asked, 'Say, sonny, what do you have there?' He said, 'Oh, I've got some birds.' What are you going to do with them?' I asked. 'Oh, mess around with them, tease them, and something like that.' 'Well I asked, 'when you get tired of them, what are you gonna do?' He thought for a moment and said, 'Well, I have a couple of cats at home and they like birds. I think I will just let them have the birds.'"

Dr. Gordon's heart went out to the little birds so he made the lad an offer. "How much do you want for the birds?" Surprised, the boy, said, "Mister, these birds are no good." "Well," Dr. Gordon said, "regardless, how much would you like for them?" The little

fellow said, "How about two bucks?" I said, "Sold!" So he reached in his pocket and peeled off two dollar bills. The little boy shoved the bird cage forward, pleased with his good fortune.

When the boy left, the pastor walked a good distance away, lifted open the cage door and said, "Shoo, shoo." And he shoved the birds out of the door and they flew free. The bird cage was a symbol of the human race trapped by sin and going to hell. Jesus Christ came as the prophecies predicted and paid the price for our freedom. He has made it possible for us to be set free.

We need to "move our wings." We need to turn to God, believe in Jesus Christ, and seek His forgiveness.