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Chapter 8

Timeline of Yeshua's Birth, Ministry, and Crucifixion: Feast of Trumpets 3 BC – Day of Atonement AD 28 Passover AD 31

God said, 'Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heaven to separate between the day and the night; and they shall serve as signs, and for [Biblical] festivals, and for days and years' (Genesis 1:14, *Genesis*, ArtScroll Tanach Series).¹

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a [Biblical] festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ [Messiah] (Colossians 2:16-17).

¹ Meir Zlotowitz (Translator and Commentator), *Genesis*, ArtScroll Tanach Series, Vol. I (a), pp. 55, 57.

BIBLICAL HOLY DAYS REVEAL GOD’S PROPHETIC TIMETABLE

On the fourth day of Creation, God established the Sun and Moon, the basis of the Biblical Calendar and the Appointed Times of the Lord, the true Biblical Holy Days.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for **seasons**, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so (Genesis 1:14-15, emphasis added).

The plural form of the Hebrew word *moed* (Strong’s #4150), translated “seasons”, has various meanings, including: “an appointment”; “a fixed time or season”; “specifically a [religious] festival”; “appointed time”; “a specific appointed time, usually for a sacred feast or festival” (Hosea 9:5; 12:9).²

What will you do on the day of the **appointed festival** And on the day of **the feast of the LORD**? (Hosea 9:5, emphasis added).

This meaning is conveyed in the ArtScroll Tanach translation of Genesis 1:14.

God said, ‘Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heaven to separate between the day and the night; and they shall serve as signs, and for [Biblical] **festivals**, and for days and years’ (Genesis 1:14, emphasis added).³

God established the Biblical (Jewish) Calendar and the Appointed Times of the Lord as the foundation and framework of all Biblical prophecy, which points to Messiah Yeshua. The Appointed Times of the Lord reveal the prophetic picture, pattern, and timetable of God’s Master Plan of Redemption, and are all about Messiah Yeshua.

This is what the apostle Paul meant when he said that the festivals, new moons, and Sabbath days are a “shadow” of the reality of Messiah Yeshua.⁴

² Spiros Zodhiates, *Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible*, Old Testament Dictionary, p. 1919.

³ Zlotowitz, Vol. I (a), pp. 55, 57.

⁴ Believers are not to be judged with regard to whether or not they observe the Biblical Sabbath or the annual Biblical Holy Days. However, what Paul said is not to be taken as approval of or justification for replacing God’s

Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a **festival** or a **new moon** or a **Sabbath day** — things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but **the substance belongs to Christ [Messiah]** (Colossians 2:16-17, emphasis added).

The Appointed Times of the Lord are the true Biblical Holy Days:

1. The Biblical Sabbath Day – Friday evening to Saturday evening (Leviticus 23:3).⁵
2. Passover (Pesah) – 14th day of the first month, Abib/Nisan (Leviticus 23:5).
3. Feast of Unleavened Bread – 7 days: 15th to 21st of Abib/Nisan (Leviticus 23:6-8).
4. Pentecost (Shavuot) – 50th day after Passover (Leviticus 23:15-21)
5. Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah) – 1st day of 7th month, Tishri (Leviticus 23:24-25).
6. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) – 10th day of 7th month, Tishri (Leviticus 23:27-28).
7. Feast of Booths/Tabernacles (Sukkot) – 7 days: 15th to 21st of 7th month, Tishri + 8th day (Leviticus 23:34-36).

The fulfillment of Biblical prophecy according to God’s prophetic pattern and timetable clearly shows a master plan beyond human knowledge, design and control. Many false messiahs have come and gone over the course of human history. God knew this would happen but has shown us how to know, beyond any shadow of a doubt, the identity of the true Messiah. In His birth, ministry, death and resurrection, Messiah Yeshua is clearly revealed and confirmed to be God’s promised Messiah because He fulfills precisely in every detail the prophetic pattern and timetable of the Appointed Times of the Lord.

TIMELINE FROM YESHUA’S BIRTH TO RESURRECTION

Note: All dates according to the Roman Julian Calendar in use at the time.

BIRTH:

3 BC Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah, Rosh HaShanah)

1st of Tishri, Wednesday, September 11th

Holy Days with pagan holidays (for example, Christmas and Easter). Paul was clearly referring to the Biblical Sabbath and Appointed Times of the Lord (“festival”, “new moon”, and “Sabbath day”), not to pagan holidays.
⁵ According to the Biblical calendar, the day begins at sunset (Genesis 1:5).

START OF PUBLIC MINISTRY:

AD 28 Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

10th of Tishri, Saturday, September 18th

Sabbath Day – Yeshua proclaimed Jubilee year (Luke 4:16-21)

CRUCIFIXION:

AD 31 Passover

14th of Nisan, Wednesday, April 25th

RESURRECTION:

AD 31 Third Day of Feast of Unleavened Bread

17th of Nisan, Saturday, April 28th

Sabbath Day – First of Seven Weekly Sabbath Days Counted from Passover to Pentecost

Note: The Greek text accounts of the resurrection explicitly state that the resurrection took place on the Sabbath day (Saturday), the first of seven weekly Sabbath days counted from Passover to Pentecost. See *The Rod of an Almond Tree in God's Master Plan*, Chapter 12 "The Biblical Sabbath Day Is the Day of the Resurrection" (www.messengers-of-messiah.org).

YESHUA'S BIRTH ON FEAST OF TRUMPETS IN 3 BC

ANCIENT AUTHORITIES AGREE BIRTH IN 3/2 BC

According to Finegan:

there is a remarkable consensus of the nine most important authorities for the year 3/2 B.C. So, from this evidence, the date of the nativity of Jesus is sought within the period 3/2 B.C.⁶

These nine authorities are: Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Africanus, Hippolytus of Rome, "Hippolytus of Thebes", Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius.⁷ In addition, Cassiodorus Senator gives the year 3 BC.⁸

⁶ Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, p. 291, section 500.

⁷ Finegan, p. 291, Table 139 "Dates of the Birth of Christ in Early Christian Sources".

⁸ Finegan, p. 291, Table 139.

TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE IN 1 BC FITS HISTORICAL TIMELINE

A key piece of astronomical data in determining the year Yeshua was born is the lunar eclipse mentioned by the first-century Jewish historian Josephus:

Josephus (*Ant.* 17.167) mentions an eclipse of the moon shortly before the death of Herod. There is also mention shortly afterward of “the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which the Jews call Passover” (*War* 2.10; *Ant.*17.213).⁹

During the period 7 BC to 1 BC, there were four lunar eclipses.¹⁰

1. Total eclipse March 23, 5 BC – twenty-nine days between eclipse and Passover
2. Total eclipse September 15, 5 BC – seven months between eclipse and Passover
3. Partial eclipse March 13, 4 BC – twenty-nine days between eclipse and Passover
4. Total eclipse January 10, 1 BC – twelve and a half weeks between eclipse and Passover

Out of these four eclipses, only one fits the historical facts:

In the last period of Herod’s life, between the eclipse shortly before he died and the Passover soon after his death, Josephus (*Ant.* 17.156-191) narrates many events. ... [Finegan lists several events.] It is plain that it would have been difficult for all this to transpire within the twenty-nine days between the [partial] eclipse of Mar 12/13 and the Passover of Apr 11 in the year 4 B.C. The seven months in 5 B.C. would of course be more than sufficient, but that date is not otherwise strongly supported. **In 1 B.C. the time would be adequate and not excessive, and this fact is an additional reason for preferring the 1 B.C. date for the death of Herod the Great** (emphasis added).¹¹

The 1 BC total lunar eclipse fits with a 3/2 BC birth date for Messiah Yeshua, agreed upon by nine of the most authoritative ancient authorities, as previously referenced.

⁹ Finegan, p. 294, Section 504.

¹⁰ Finegan, p. 295, Table 142 “Lunar Eclipses from 7 B.C. to 1 B.C.”

¹¹ Finegan, p. 300, Section 515.

EMPIRE-WIDE REGISTRATION EVENT IN 3 BC

According to Luke 2:2, Yeshua was born at the time of the first “enrollment” or “census” taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria:

In Luke 2:2 the Greek word for the first “enrollment,” which took place at the time of the birth of Jesus ... means “to write out,” “enter in a list,” “register,” [and] therefore can be translated either as “census” or as “registration.” Translated as “census” it is usually taken to have to do with taxation, but translated as “registration” it can be understood to have to do with some other matter for which people were required to register. **In fact there was an event at precisely the time with which we are here concerned that could well have called for an empire-wide registration and could have been what we are concerned with at Bethlehem** (emphasis added).¹²

That event was the conferring of the title “Father of my Country” to Emperor Augustus by “the whole people of Rome”:

For “the whole people of Rome” to bestow the honor there must have been some kind of universal registration, perhaps an oath of loyalty such as that of which Josephus (*Ant.* 17.41–45) tells “when ... the whole Jewish nation took an oath to be faithful to Caesar,” but which six thousand Pharisees refused to swear. The date of the honor for Augustus in his thirteenth consulship is the year 2 B.C. (Table 41); the conferring of the title was on Feb 5, 2 B.C.; **the registering of the people must have been ordered and carried out sometime in 3 B.C. or at least before Feb. 5, 2 B.C.**¹³

The timing of this registration lines up with Yeshua’s birth in 3 BC, as we will show.

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM – MAJOR ASTRONOMICAL EVENTS IN 3/2 BC

Matthew refers to a “star” seen by the Magi, who interpreted it as a sign of the birth of the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2). During the period 3/2 BC, remarkable astronomical events associated with the birth of Yeshua occurred:

¹² Finegan, pp. 305-306, Section 525.

¹³ Finegan, p. 306, Section 525.

In the years 3 and 2 B.C. there ... were planetary and stellar events even more striking than those of 7 and 6 B.C. On the morning of August 12, 3 B.C., Jupiter and Venus rose in the eastern sky, an event which could have been what was meant when the magi said: **“We have seen his star in the East” or “in its rising” (Matt 2:2).** ... In this conjunction Jupiter and Venus were so close that they were almost touching each other. ... **The conjunction took place in the constellation Leo (the Lion) and near the bright fixed star Regulus. Regulus is the king star and the Lion constellation is the tribal sign of Judah,** as in Genesis 49:9 where Jacob blesses his son Judah and says, “Judah is a lion’s whelp.” Afterward Jupiter moved on to be in close conjunctions with Regulus three times (a triple conjunction on Sept 14, 3 B.C., Feb 17, 2 B.C., and May 8, 2 B.C.), then on June 17, 2 B.C., came again into conjunction with Venus, this time being so close that without a modern telescope the two planets would have looked like a single star. In the fall and winter 3/2 B.C. Jupiter appeared to stop several times against the background of the stars; and on June 17, 2 B.C., Jupiter and Venus were in extremely close conjunction and shown almost like a single bright star in the west—in the direction of Jerusalem as seen from Babylonia (emphasis added).¹⁴

The August 12, 3 BC conjunction of Jupiter and Venus in the constellation Leo (the Lion), the sign of the Tribe of Judah, took place one month before Yeshua’s birth on September 11, 3 BC. The conjunction took place on the 1st day of the sixth month, Elul, exactly one lunar month prior to Yeshua’s birth on the 1st day of the seventh month, Tishri.

The timing of this conjunction is prophetically significant because the month of Elul begins a period of repentance leading up to the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah) and the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur).¹⁵ This same prophetic timetable and pattern repeated at the time of Yeshua’s immersion (baptism), during the time John the Baptist was calling the people to repentance, in preparation for Messiah Yeshua’s ministry (Luke 3:3-6).

¹⁴ Finegan, p. 319, Section 550. Finegan credits the information in the above paragraph from calculations and publications at the Griffith Observatory, Los Angeles. See also *The Christmas Star* by John Moseley (Griffith Observatory, 1987).

¹⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elul>

It is important to note that the Magi visited Yeshua months after His birth, not at the time of his birth (Matthew 2:11). Herod's decision to kill all males two years of age and under in Bethlehem, based upon the Magi's report, gives us an indication of Yeshua's age at the time of the Magi's visitation (Matthew 2:7, 16).

REVELATION 12 ASTRONOMICAL SIGN SHOWS FEAST OF TRUMPETS BIRTH

Ernest Martin's book, *The Star That Astonished the World*, is the most comprehensive and detailed book on the subject of accurately determining the true birth date of Messiah Yeshua.¹⁶ This book covers all the relevant Biblical, historical, and astronomical evidence showing that Yeshua was born on the Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah, Rosh HaShanah) in 3 BC.

Based upon the week John's father served at the Temple (according to the course of Abijah – Luke 1:5), Martin explains how the conception of John the Baptist six months before Yeshua's conception (Luke 1:36) provides an important clue as to the time of year:

This would indicate that the conception of John as well as Jesus was most probably in 4 B.C. Luke mentioned that Zechariah was serving at his regular time of administration during the week when the eighth course of Abijah served. This course had duty two times each year, once in late **Spring** and again in late Autumn (emphasis added).¹⁷

Martin determined the time of John's conception (May 19 to May 26, 4 BC) and birth (near March 10, 3 BC)¹⁸ This places Yeshua's birth in September 3 BC.

There is another reason for placing **Jesus' birth in September**, and it is a powerful one. This is because the **New Testament** itself gives a precise chronological sign that **identifies the exact day Jesus was born** (within a period of an hour and a half on that day) (emphasis added).¹⁹

The astronomical picture that reveals the precise time of Yeshua's birth is in Revelation 12:

¹⁶ <http://www.askelm.com/star/>

¹⁷ Ernest Martin, *The Star That Astonished the World*, p. 76.

¹⁸ Martin, pp. 76-78.

¹⁹ Martin, p. 80.

And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman [Israel] clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth. ... And she gave birth to a son [Yeshua], a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up to God and to His throne (Revelation 12:1-2, 5).

The Woman represents Israel and the Child represents Messiah Yeshua. The sign shows the positions of the Sun and Moon in relation to the constellation Virgo. The Sun is located in the central area of Virgo, indicating the time of year. The Moon is located under Virgo's feet, indicating the time of the New Moon, the beginning of the Biblical month. There is only one Appointed Time of the Lord that fits this astronomical configuration—Feast of Trumpets (Yom Teruah), also known as Rosh HaShanah, the 1st of the seventh month, Tishri.

In 3 BC, the position of the Sun in relation to the constellation Virgo occurred from about August 27 to September 15:

The only time in the year that the Sun could be in a position to “clothe” the celestial woman called Virgo (that is, to be mid-bodied to her, in the region where a pregnant woman carries a child) is when the Sun is located between about 150 and 170 degrees along the ecliptic. This “clothing” of the woman by the Sun occurs for a 20-day period each year. This 20 degree spread could indicate the general time Jesus was born. **In 3 B.C., the Sun would have entered this celestial region about August 27 and exited from it about September 15.**²⁰

This heavenly woman called Virgo is normally depicted as a virgin holding in her right hand a green branch and in her left hand a sprig of grain. In the Hebrew Zodiac, she at first (in the time of David) denoted Ruth who was gleaning in the fields of Boaz. She then later became the Virgin when the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 was given in the time of Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. This Virgin held in her left hand a sprig of grain. This was precisely where the bright star called Spica is found. Indeed, **the chief star of the constellation Virgo is Spica.** Bullinger, in his book “The Witness of the Stars” (pp. 29-34), said that the word “Spica” has, through the Arabic, the meaning “the branch” and that it

²⁰ Martin, p. 83.

symbolically refers to Jesus who was prophetically called “the Branch” in Zechariah 3:8 and 6:12. And Bullinger (and Seiss in his book “The Gospel in the Stars”) maintain that this **sign of Virgo designates the heavenly witness for the birth of the Messiah** (Jesus) (emphasis added).²¹

In 3 BC, the position of the Moon in relation to the constellation Virgo and the Sun pinpoints the exact day of Yeshua’ birth on September 11th. The date on the Biblical Calendar was the 1st of Tishri, the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), associated with God’s kingship.²²

Since the feet of Virgo the Virgin represent the last 7 degrees of the constellation (in the time of Jesus this would have been between about 180 and 187 degrees along the ecliptic), the Moon has to be positioned somewhere under that 7 degree arc to satisfy the description in Revelation Twelve. But the Moon also has to be in that exact location when the Sun is mid-bodied to Virgo. **In the year 3 B.C.**, these two factors came to precise agreement for about an hour and a half, as observed from Palestine or Patmos [where the apostle John had the vision], in **the twilight period of September 11th**. The relationship began about 6:15 p.m. (sunset), and lasted until around 7:45 p.m. (moonset). **This is the only day in the whole year that the astronomical phenomenon described in the twelfth chapter of Revelation could take place.**

This also shows one other important point. The Moon was in crescent phase. It was a New Moon day, the start of a new lunar month.²³

What New Moon could this have been? The answer is most amazing. It is almost too amazing! **September 11, 3 B.C. was Tishri One** on the Jewish calendar. To Jewish people this would have been a very profound occasion indeed. Tishri One is none other than the Jewish New Year’s day (*Rosh ha-Shanah*, or as the Bible calls it, **The Day of Trumpets**—Leviticus 23:23-26 (emphasis added)).²⁴

²¹ Martin, pp. 83-84.

²² Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols*, p. 140.

²³ Martin, pp. 86-87.

²⁴ Martin, p. 90.

START OF YESHUA'S PUBLIC MINISTRY IN AD 28

According to Luke 3:23, Yeshua was about thirty years old at the time of His immersion (baptism) in the Jordan River, not long before the start of His public ministry. This is significant because not until a priest reached the age of thirty could he serve (Numbers 4:3, 47), and Yeshua is the High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20).

Yeshua began His public ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3:1). According to Finegan, the context of Luke's writings shows that his reference to the reign of Tiberius indicates "Tiberius's own sole rule (from the death of Augustus, Aug 19, AD 14) and that this rule is to be reckoned in terms of the Julian calendar."²⁵ Counting years from the death of Augustus, the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius is AD 28.²⁶

According to Luke, Yeshua began His public ministry on a weekly Sabbath day, when He read from the scroll of Isaiah:

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. And the book [scroll] of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book [scroll], and found the place where it was written, "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL [GOOD NEWS] TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE DOWNTRODDEN, TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD." And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:16-21).

Yeshua read from Isaiah 61:1-2, but left out the reference to "the day of vengeance of our God", referring to the judgment to come at the time of Yeshua's return. He proclaimed "the favorable

²⁵ Finegan, p. 338, Section 580.

²⁶ Finegan, p. 331, Table 150 "Regnal Years of Tiberius Caesar", Column 3. See also p. 334, Table 159 "Regnal Years of Tiberius from His Succession to Augustus, Counted as Julian Calendar Years according to the Non-Accession-Year System" (January 1–December 31, AD 28).

year of the Lord”, a reference to the year of Jubilee, when all servants were freed and all debts forgiven.

‘You are also to count off seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years, so that you have the time of the seven sabbaths of years, namely, forty-nine years. **You shall then sound a ram’s horn abroad on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the day of atonement you shall sound a horn all through your land. You shall thus consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim a release through the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you**, and each of you shall return to his own property, and each of you shall return to his family. You shall have the fiftieth year as a jubilee; you shall not sow, nor reap its aftergrowth, nor gather in from its untrimmed vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you. You shall eat its crops out of the field’ (Leviticus 25:8-12, emphasis added).

The year of Jubilee was proclaimed on the Day of Atonement, the 10th of Tishri, the seventh month of the Biblical (Jewish) Calendar. The year of Jubilee was the 50th year following seven Sabbatical cycles. (Each Sabbatical cycle was a period of seven years.) This means that the 50th year coincided with the first year of the next Sabbatical cycle.

Sabbatical-cycle years are counted from Rosh HaShanah to Rosh Hashanah. According to the Sabbatical cycles as determined by Wacholder, Rosh HaShanah AD 28 to Rosh HaShanah AD 29 was the first year of a Sabbatical cycle. This fits the prophetic timetable of Yeshua’s proclamation of the Jubilee year. And, in fact, according to the Biblical (Jewish) Calendar, the Day of Atonement did fall on Saturday, the weekly Sabbath day, in the year AD 28. This confirms that the timeline for Yeshua’s birth and start of His ministry is correct.

Note of explanation regarding confirmation that the Day of Atonement fell on Saturday:

Although the Day of Atonement in AD 28 falls on Saturday according to the fixed (calculated) Jewish Calendar, it is necessary to confirm the accuracy of the fixed calendar. This is because at the time of Yeshua, the start of the month was based upon direct observation of the first visible crescent of the New Moon at sunset in Jerusalem.

To determine the accuracy of the fixed Jewish Calendar for the month of Tishri in the year AD 28, we went to www.TorahCalendar.com and clicked on “Determining the Hebrew Month”.

Under “View New Moons for any Hebrew Month”, “New Moon Day” (selected), we entered 7 for the seventh month (Tishri) and the year 28 C.E. (note: C.E. is the same as AD; although “Gregorian Year” is indicated, years before 1582 are Julian Calendar Years).

We next clicked “View” for the program to do the calculation and bring up the illustration for the “New Moon in Jerusalem at the Moment of Sunset” to confirm that the New Moon crescent falls within the white lines, showing that it was visible in Jerusalem (weather conditions permitting). This confirms the first day of the month of the Biblical (Jewish) Calendar.

In this case, the 1st of Tishri fell on Wednesday, September 8, 28. This means that the 10th of Tishri fell on Saturday, September 18, 28. This can then be compared to the fixed calendar at <http://www.abdiccate.net/cal.aspx> by entering the Julian Calendar date (September 18, 28) and seeing that it falls on Saturday and is the 10th of Tishri according to the Jewish Calendar. We will explain more about the Biblical (Jewish) Calendar below in dealing with determining the correct year of the crucifixion.

In the years AD 29 and AD 30, the Day of Atonement does not fall on Saturday, and therefore does not fit the Biblical timeline. In the year AD 29, the Day of Atonement fell on Thursday. In the year AD 30, the Day of Atonement fell on Tuesday.

Note that the fixed Jewish Calendar date calculated at <http://www.abdiccate.net/cal.aspx> is correct for the month of Tishri in AD 29; date and day of the New Moon for the 1st of Tishri verified at www.TorahCalendar.com.²⁷ The fixed Jewish Calendar date for the month of Tishri in AD 30 is off by one day, based upon the day when the New Moon crescent was actually visible in Jerusalem. Therefore, although the fixed calendar date for the 10th of Tishri falls on Monday, the day of the week was actually Tuesday.²⁸

YESHUA’S CRUCIFIXION ON WEDNESDAY IN AD 31

Prior to June 2014, we identified AD 30 as the year of the crucifixion, based upon the fixed (calculated) Jewish Calendar that showed Passover (14th of Nisan), the date of the crucifixion,

²⁷ 1st of Tishri 3790, September 27, AD 29, falls on Tuesday. New Moon verified at www.TorahCalendar.com. The Day of Atonement, the 10th of Tishri 3790, October 6, AD 29, falls on Thursday.

²⁸ 1st of Tishri 3791, September 16, AD 30, falls on Saturday according to www.abdiccate.net/cal.aspx but www.TorahCalendar.com calculates the New Moon’s first crescent not visible in Jerusalem until the following evening, so that the date shifts to next day, Sunday, September 17. This means that the Day of Atonement, the 10th of Tishri on the fixed Jewish calendar, also shifts by one day, from Monday, September 25, to Tuesday, September 26, AD 30.

falling on Wednesday, and the resurrection three days and three nights later (in fulfillment of the Sign of Jonah) falling on Saturday, the weekly Sabbath day (17th of Nisan). Also, there was no other year according to the fixed Jewish Calendar that could fit the timeline of Yeshua's birth and public ministry start date.

In June 2014, information became available to us that showed the fixed Jewish Calendar is off by two days for the month of Nisan in AD 30. This means that Passover (14th of Nisan) actually fell on Friday rather than on Wednesday. This shows AD 30 cannot be the year of the crucifixion. However, with this new information, we were able to confirm that in AD 31, Passover did fall on Wednesday, and this is the only year that fits all the astronomical, historical, and Biblical facts.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL (JEWISH) CALENDAR

Before we show why AD 31 is the year of the crucifixion, we need to explain why the fixed (calculated) Jewish Calendar is off by two days for the month of Nisan in the year AD 30. To understand why, we must have a basic understanding of the Biblical Hebraic (Jewish) Calendar.

Since Biblical times the months and years of the Jewish calendar have been established by the cycles of the moon and the sun. The traditional law prescribes that the months shall follow closely the course of the moon, from its *Molad* (birth, conjunction) to the next New Moon. Furthermore, the lunar months must always correspond to the seasons of the year, which are governed by the sun. The month of Nisan with the Passover Festival, for instance, must occur in the Spring and the month of Tishri with the harvest festival of Succoth [Sukkot] in Fall.

Thus, the Jewish calendar is LUNI-SOLAR. It is in contrast to our civil calendar, the Gregorian [and the Julian], which is purely solar, and in which the months have completely lost their relation to the moon. But it is also quite different from the Mohammedan [Islamic] calendar, an absolutely lunar system, in which every month follows the moon closely but wanders through all four seasons during the period of 33 years.

Unlike these, which are either altogether solar, or altogether lunar, the Jewish calendar must meet *two* requirements, both solar and lunar. This accounts for its relatively complicated structure. Since the solar year of about 365 days is

approximately 11 days longer than 12 lunar months, the Jewish calendar is faced with the problem of balancing the solar with the lunar years.

In the early times of our history the solution was found by the following practical procedure: The beginnings of the months were determined by direct observation of the new moon. Then those beginnings of the months (Rosh Hodesh) were sanctified and announced by the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court in Jerusalem, after witnesses had testified that they had seen the new crescent and after their testimony had been thoroughly examined, confirmed by calculation and duly accepted. The Jewish communities were notified of the beginning of the months (Rosh Hodesh) in earlier time by kindling of night fires on the mountains, and later on by messengers.

A special committee of the Sanhedrin, with its president as chairman, had the mandate to regulate and balance the solar with the lunar years. This so-called Calendar Council (*Sod Haibbur*) calculated the beginnings of the seasons (Tekufoth) on the basis of astronomical figures which had been handed down as a tradition of old. Whenever, after two or three years, the annual excess of 11 days had accumulated to approximately 30 days, a thirteenth month Adar II was inserted before Nisan in order to assure that Nisan and Passover would occur in Spring and not regress toward winter. However, the astronomical calculation was not the only basis for intercalation of a thirteenth month. The delay of the actual arrival of spring was another decisive factor. The Talmudic sources report that the Council intercalated a year when the barley in the fields had not yet ripened, when the fruit on the trees had not grown properly, when the winter rains had not stopped, when the roads for Passover pilgrims had not dried up, and when the young pigeons had not become fledged. The Council on intercalation considered the astronomical facts together with the religious requirements of Passover and the natural conditions of the country.

This method of observation and intercalation was in use throughout the period of the second temple (516 B.C.E. – 70 C.E.), and about three centuries after its destruction, as long as there was an independent Sanhedrin. In the fourth century, however, when oppression and persecution threatened the continued existence of the Sanhedrin, the patriarch Hillel II took the extraordinary step to preserve the unity of Israel. In order to prevent the Jews scattered all over the surface of the

earth from celebrating their New Moons, festivals and holidays at different times, he made public the system of calendar calculation which up to then had been a closely guarded secret. It had been used in the past only to check the observations and testimonies of witnesses, and to determine the beginnings of the spring season.

In accordance with this system, Hillel II formally sanctified all months in advance, and intercalated all future leap years until such time as a new, recognized Sanhedrin would be established in Israel. This is the permanent calendar according to which the New Moons and Festivals are calculated and celebrated today by Jews all over the world. Like the former system of observation, it is based on the Luni-Solar principle. It also applies certain rules by which the astronomical facts are combined with the religious requirements into an admirable calendar system.²⁹

When calendar calculators, such as The Shepherd's Page calendar converter for the Jewish, Julian, and Gregorian Calendars (<http://www.abdicate.net/cal.aspx>), are used, we need to understand that the fixed Jewish Calendar dates obtained for dates during the time of Yeshua may be off by one or two days, depending upon whether or not the first day of the month in question lines up with the day that the first crescent of the New Moon was actually visible in Jerusalem.

DETERMINING THE YEAR OF THE CRUCIFIXION

In order to confirm the correct year for the crucifixion, the year when Passover fell on Wednesday, we referred to four sources to confirm the dates when the first crescent of the New Moon for the month of Nisan was visible in Jerusalem for the years AD 30, 31, and 32.

1. Bradley E. Schaefer, "Lunar Visibility and the Crucifixion", *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society*, Vol. 31, pages 53-67, 1990.³⁰
2. Pallant Ramsundar, "Dating Christ's Crucifixion", University of Cambridge.³¹

²⁹ Arthur Spier, *The Comprehensive Hebrew Calendar*, pp. 1-2.

³⁰ <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/1990QJRAS...31...53S>

³¹ <http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/RamsundarP01.pdf> (To access, copy and paste the URL.)

Note that Ramsundar uses the incorrect birth date of 5 BC and as a result comes to the incorrect conclusion that Yeshua began His ministry in AD 26 and was crucified in AD 28. However, Ramsundar correctly recognizes that Yeshua was crucified on Wednesday, and also provides Schaefer's astronomical data for possible crucifixion dates in a more easily understood format.

3. “Determining the Hebrew Month” (www.TorahCalendar.com).³²
4. Starry Night, astronomy software.³³

According to Schaefer:

One of the primary uncertainties in identifying a specific date is that the first dates of Jewish months were based (in ancient times) on the first visibility of the thin lunar crescent soon after the new moon. The calculation of these dates is a difficult astronomical problem. Recently, however, a new algorithm has been developed which improves the accuracy of lunar visibility predictions by over a factor of two when compared with the best previous algorithm. For this reason, I have re-examined the question of the visibility of the young crescent moon from Jerusalem for the first four solar months during the reign of Pontius Pilate. The new results do not substantially alter the conclusions obtained with the previous best algorithm.³⁴

Schaefer’s data covers the years AD 26 through AD 36, when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea. However, since we have confirmed that Yeshua was born in 3 BC, and He began His public ministry in AD 28, we can narrow our search to the period AD 30 to AD 32, based on the possible lengths of Yeshua’s ministry (1½, 2½, and 3½ years respectively).

As Passover falls in March or April, these are the months to examine in Schaefer’s Table I “The visibility of the young crescent moon, calculated for dates between AD 26 and AD 36”. The dates are according to the Julian Calendar in use at the time.³⁵ (Note: The Gregorian Calendar was not put into use until 1582, and began by skipping 10 calendar days, to restore 21 March as the date of the vernal equinox.³⁶)

Pallant Ramsundar has taken data from Schaefer’s Table I and put it into a more easily understandable format that we have modified for the purposes of this study. In addition, we have verified the Julian Calendar dates and days of the week for the possible start dates of the

³² <http://www.torahcalendar.com/MOON.asp?JDN=2456837&TDAY=1&MNFLG=1>

³³ <http://astronomy.starrynight.com>

³⁴ Bradley E. Schaefer, “Lunar Visibility and the Crucifixion”, *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society*, Vol. 31, p. 53.

³⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_calendar

³⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gregorian_calendar

month of Nisan, and for the possible crucifixion dates.^{37,38,39} Note that we have not included dates from Schaefer's data or Ramsunder's chart that cause Passover (14th of Nisan) to fall too early (before the Spring Equinox) or too late (May).

Note: The day begins at midnight according to the Julian Calendar whereas the day begins at sunset according to the Jewish Calendar.

AD 30 One Possible Crucifixion Date (Julian Calendar)

1 st of Abib (Nisan)	14 th of Abib (Nisan)
(starting at sunset on)	(ending at sunset on)
Friday March 24	Friday April 7

Comment: Passover does not fall on Wednesday.

AD 31 Two Possible Crucifixion Dates (Julian Calendar)

1 st of Abib (Nisan)	14 th of Abib (Nisan)
(starting at sunset on)	(ending at sunset on)
Tuesday March 13 (pre-Equinox)	Tuesday March 27

Wednesday April 11, AD 31 (post-Equinox) Wednesday April 25, AD 31

Comment: Passover falls on Wednesday for the 1st of Nisan post-Equinox date.

AD 32 One Possible Crucifixion Date (Julian Calendar)

1 st of Abib (Nisan)	14 th of Abib (Nisan)
(starting at sunset on)	(ending at sunset on)
Monday March 31	Monday April 14

Comment: Passover does not fall on Wednesday.

As the data shows, there is only one possible date for the crucifixion that fits all the astronomical, historical, and Biblical facts and evidence: Wednesday, April 25, AD 31.

Note that for this date, the 1st of Nisan falls AFTER the Spring Equinox, whereas the earlier possible New Moon date falls BEFORE the Spring Equinox. The reason we point out this difference is because the fixed Jewish Calendar date follows the pre-Equinox date for the 1st of

³⁷ <http://www.torahcalendar.com/MOON.asp?JDN=2456837&TDAY=1&MNFLG=1>

³⁸ Starry Night astronomy software.

³⁹ <http://www.abdicate.net/cal.aspx>

Nisan.^{40,41} The way the calculated fixed Jewish Calendar works, the 1st of Nisan may fall before the Spring Equinox, as long as Passover falls on or after the Spring Equinox.⁴² (Note: The Passover lambs were sacrificed in the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan; the Passover meal was eaten after sunset, the start of the 15th of Nisan, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)

There is a difference of opinion between those who follow this manner of determining the 1st of Nisan (i.e. those who follow the manner of the fixed Jewish Calendar calculation) and those who believe that the 1st of Nisan must fall AFTER the Spring Equinox. Although we can see that the correct year of the crucifixion depends upon the 1st of Nisan in this case falling after the Spring Equinox, the actual reason for this more likely has to do with the addition of a 13th intercalary month, as we will explain in the next section.

ADDITION OF A 13TH MONTH AND THE BARLEY HARVEST FACTOR

Regardless of the difference of opinion as to whether the 1st of Nisan can start before the Spring Equinox or that it must start after the Spring Equinox, there is another key factor that needs to be considered in determining the date for the 1st of Nisan. That is the possible addition of a 13th intercalary month before the month of Nisan. As previously explained, a 13th month had to be added to the calendar every 2-3 years in order to keep the Appointed Times of the Lord, such as Passover, in the correct season, in this case, Spring.

Another important requirement was that the barley crop had to be ripe for the Wave Offering (16th of Nisan) following Passover. If this was not the case, a 13th month was added:

While the Sanhedrin presided in Jerusalem, there was no set calendar. They would evaluate every year to determine whether it should be declared a leap year.

Several factors were considered in the course of their deliberations. The primary factor, which overrode all others, was the spring equinox. If the spring equinox would fall later than the first half of Nissan (i.e., on the 16th or later), then the year was automatically declared to be a leap year.

⁴⁰ <http://www.torahcalendar.com/MOON.asp?JDN=2456837&TDAY=1&MNFLG=1>

⁴¹ <http://www.abdicare.net/cal.aspx>

⁴² “Pesach [Passover] must occur during the spring (tekufas Nissan). Therefore, the tekufah [Spring Equinox] must occur on or before the 15th of Nissan” - See more at: <http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/161959/why-is-this-pesach-the-earliest-since-1899.html#sthash.3hK6yjAb.dpuf>

However, it wasn't enough for Passover to fall after the equinox, when it was "officially" spring; spring-like conditions needed to be evidenced. If in the land of Israel the barley² had not yet ripened, and the trees were not yet blossoming with seasonal fruit—that, too, was sufficient reason to delay Nissan by adding a second month of Adar. Spring should be felt; it should be bright and green.

There were also several non-season-related factors which the Sanhedrin considered; for example, if the roads or bridges were in disrepair due to the winter rainy season, impeding the ability of the pilgrims to travel to Jerusalem for Passover.⁴³

The earlier in the year the first possible date for the 1st of Nisan fell, especially when it fell before the Spring Equinox, the more likely the barley harvest might not be ripe for the Passover Wave offering, necessitating the addition of a 13th month. This seems to have been the case for the year AD 31, when the pre-Equinox date for the 1st of Nisan fell on March 13th and the post-Equinox date fell on April 11th. All the available evidence shows that a 13th month (Adar II) was added to the calendar in AD 31 so that it fits the prophetic timeline of Yeshua's crucifixion and resurrection. The most likely reason for this was to allow another month for the barley harvest to ripen and be ready for harvest so that the Passover Wave Offering could be made.

The fixed Jewish Calendar was not instituted until hundreds of years after the crucifixion and follows a set pattern for the addition of the 13th month. There is no consideration of the barley harvest being ripe for the Passover Wave Offering because there is no Temple and no Passover sacrifices at this time. Therefore, we cannot rely on the accuracy of the fixed Jewish Calendar for the actual date of the 1st of Nisan in the year AD 31.

Both the Shepherd's Page Calendar Converter (www.abdiccate.net) and TorahCalendar.com show the PRE-Equinox date for the 1st of Nisan in AD 31. For this reason, the date for the POST-Equinox date, April 11, AD 31 is determined to be the SECOND month of the Jewish Calendar (Iyar) instead of the FIRST month. However, when we view all the evidence together, it points to Wednesday, April 25, AD 31 as the correct date for the crucifixion, as this is the only date that fits the timeline.

⁴³ http://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/495531/jewish/How-Does-the-Spring-Equinox-Relate-to-the-Timing-of-Passover.htm

LENGTH OF YESHUA'S MINISTRY

As previously shown, Yeshua started His public ministry on the Day of Atonement in the year AD 28, proclaiming the year of Jubilee. As we have also shown, based upon the astronomical data, we have been able to confirm AD 31 as the year of Yeshua's crucifixion. This period of time is approximately two years and seven months (counting the 13th month in AD 31).

This is in agreement with Eusebius, who became Bishop of Caesarea about AD 314, and is known as the "Father of Church History".⁴⁴

In the *Chronicle* of Eusebius as translated by Jerome, the preaching of John the Baptist is placed in the fifteenth year of Tiberius (= A.D. 28) and the death of Jesus in the eighteenth year (= A.D. 31), and thus the ministry appears to cover two years and a portion of a third ...⁴⁵

The Synoptic accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the final Passover in Yeshua's ministry, and seem to indicate a period of approximately a year and a half:

The final Passover in the Synoptic record came, of course, in the springtime. But another Synoptic passage (Mark 2:23; Matt 12:1; Luke 6:1) appears plainly to refer to a springtime prior to that final one, for it tells how the disciples plucked ears of grain, and thus it implies the spring harvest time, perhaps Apr/May. ... Since the baptism (Mark 1:9) was obviously prior to that, perhaps in the preceding fall, the total ministry was at least somewhat over one year in length.⁴⁶

The Synoptic record does not necessarily, however, require as brief of a ministry as that just indicated. A springtime is indicated (Mark 2:23, etc.) without mention of a corresponding Passover. Other Passovers could have gone unmentioned. Or the Synoptic record could cover only a part—perhaps the part deemed most important—of a longer ministry. Along this line Ethelbert Stauffer remarks that it is not possible to fit the chronological structure of the Gospel according to John within the narrow span of the Synoptic account, but **it is possible to fit the Synoptic framework into John's structure,** and

⁴⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eusebius>

⁴⁵ Finegan, p. 352, Section 602.

⁴⁶ Finegan, p. 350, Section 598.

he judges this to be important evidence for the correctness of the Johannine chronology (emphasis added).⁴⁷

Therefore, we need to see how John's account fits a ministry length of about two and a half years, from the Day of Atonement AD 28 to Passover AD 31. The first consideration is recognizing that the Passover in John 2:13, which includes an account of Yeshua cleansing the Temple, is out of place and is actually the last Passover. According to Robertson: "Many scholars consider this the same incident as that in the Synoptic Gospels".⁴⁸

In the Synoptic Gospels the cleansing of the temple occurs on the final visit of Jesus to Jerusalem and near the time of the final Passover (Mark 11:15ff., etc.). It is possible that John transposed this event to a place near the beginning of the ministry for some symbolic reason.⁴⁹

Why might this section, describing the cleansing of the Temple that occurred just before the last Passover in Yeshua's ministry, have been moved to the beginning of John's account? It may have had to do with emphasizing the signs Yeshua performed, from the first miracle at Cana to Yeshua's resurrection. John makes the point that the sign at the Cana wedding was the "beginning of signs" performed by Yeshua (John 2:11). John then skips to Yeshua cleansing the Temple, and being asked by the Jews for a sign, to which He replies: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up", referring to His body (John 2:19, 21).

So the emphasis in this context seems to be on the signs Yeshua performed, from the beginning of His ministry in Cana to His resurrection. John says that the disciples remembered Yeshua's words after He had risen from the dead (John 2:22). So it appears that John was emphasizing the first to the greatest sign showing that Yeshua is the Messiah.

After Yeshua returned to Cana (John 4:46), He healed the son of a man from Capernaum. John records that this was the "second sign" Yeshua did "when He had come out of Judea into Galilee" (John 4:54). The first sign was the Cana wedding miracle (John 2:11). This indicates that John 2 about raising the temple, Yeshua's body, in answer to the Jews' question for a sign, is out of place and belongs at the end of Yeshua's ministry, not at the beginning.

⁴⁷ Finegan, p. 351, Section 599.

⁴⁸ A. T. Robertson, *A Harmony of the Gospels*, p. 25, footnote.

⁴⁹ Finegan, p. 351, Section 600.

CHRONOLOGY OF YESHUA’S MINISTRY

Yeshua immerses in the Jordan River about the age of thirty in AD 28 (Luke 3:23).

Yeshua led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for forty days (Luke 4:1-2).

Yeshua turns thirty years old on Feast of Trumpets (Rosh HaShanah – 1st of Tishri) in AD 28.

FEAST OF TRUMPETS (ROSH HASHANAH) AD 28

Yeshua returns to Galilee and begins His public ministry. On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur – 10th of Tishri), Yeshua enters the Nazareth synagogue on the weekly Sabbath day in AD 28 and reads Isaiah 61:1-2, proclaiming the Jubilee year (Luke 4:16-21).⁵⁰

DAY OF ATONEMENT (YOM KIPPUR) AD 28

Yeshua would have gone to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot – 15th through 21st of Tishri) in AD 28, as all adult Jewish males were required to attend the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover (Pesach), Pentecost (Shavuot), and Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).⁵¹

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (SUKKOT) AD 28

Yeshua goes to the Jordan River, where John the Baptist is calling the people to repentance, and immersion (baptism) into the Jordan River as an outward sign of their repentance. John calls attention to Yeshua, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and directs his disciples to Yeshua (John 1:26-39). Andrew and Peter follow Yeshua (John 1:40-42).

Yeshua returns to Galilee (John 1:43).

Yeshua performs the Cana wedding miracle (John 2:1).

Yeshua goes to Judea with His disciples (John 3:22-36).

⁵⁰ Yeshua omits the reference in Isaiah 61:2 to “the day of vengeance of our God”. Yeshua refers to the “favorable year of the Lord” and that He has come to “proclaim liberty to the captives and freedom to prisoners”, indicating His proclamation of the Jubilee year.

⁵¹ Exodus 23:14-17; 34:18-23; Deuteronomy 16.

Yeshua returns from Judea to Galilee through Samaria (John 4).

Yeshua returns to Galilee (John 4:43).

“So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, **having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast**” (John 4:45). The feast referred to is the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot) in AD 28.

REFERENCE TO FEAST OF TABERNACLES (SUKKOT) AD 28

The first Feast of Tabernacles that Yeshua attended after the start of His public ministry.

Yeshua returns to Cana (John 4:46).

Yeshua goes to Jerusalem for “**a feast of the Jews**” (John 5:1). This is a reference to one of the three pilgrimage festivals: Passover (Pesach), Pentecost (Shavuot), and Tabernacles (Sukkot).

PASSOVER, PENTECOST, OR TABERNACLES (SUKKOT) AD 29

Note: Counting from the first Feast of Tabernacles in AD 28 to the second Feast of Tabernacles in AD 29 marks one year since the start of Yeshua’s public ministry.

Yeshua in Galilee; feeds the 5000 (John 6).

“Now the **Passover, the feast of the Jews**, was at hand” (John 6:4).

Yeshua would have gone to Jerusalem for Passover, as required for all Jewish adult males.

PASSOVER (PESACH) AD 30

“Now **the feast of the Jews, the Feast of Booths**, was at hand” (John 7:2). The Feast of Booths is the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot).

FEAST OF TABERNACLES (SUKKOT) AD 30

Note: Counting from the first Feast of Tabernacles in AD 28 to the third Feast of Tabernacles in AD 30 marks two years since the start of Yeshua’s public ministry.

“At that time **the Feast of Dedication** took place at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus [Yeshua] was walking in the temple in the portico of Solomon” (John 10:22-23). The Feast of Dedication is also called Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights.

FEAST OF DEDICATION AD 30

“Now **the Passover of the Jews was at hand**, and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country before the Passover, to purify themselves (John 11:55). This was the last Passover before Yeshua’s crucifixion.

PASSOVER (PESACH) AD 31 – CRUCIFIXION

This marks two and a half years since Yeshua began His public ministry in AD 28.

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