

# How Long was Jesus' Ministry?

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How long did the Ministry of Jesus Christ last? Some say one Year, others just over 3 years- which is it?

Some claim, The Synoptic Gospels imply a ministry of only one year. Everything in those accounts fits nicely into one year and that there is no indication that Jesus made multiple trips to Jerusalem in Mark, Matthew, or Luke-Is this true?

## **Bible Clues**

There are many crucial events and historical characters in the Bible that we can pinpoint the time when Jesus ministry started and when it ended. The Gospels of course are the main source we must go to, to know when Jesus was on this earth. The time he started his ministry and when he died.

The Old Testament is also a crucial source as well. Daniel the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter is a great prophecy that gives us the actual timing of the appearance of the Messiah which is Jesus Christ.

The Major events & historical characters that one can pinpoint the dates of the arrival, Ministry and death of Jesus are:

- The decree was made during the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign (457 B.C.).
- The Time of Herod's Death
- Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age.
- Time of Construction of the Temple
- The Reign of Emperor Tiberius
- The Governorship of Pontius Pilate
- The Length of Christ's Ministry in the Gospels
- Jesus was crucified at the instigation of the first century high priest named Caiaphas

Using this information according to ancient history we can know when Jesus was on this earth, how long was his ministry, and when he died.

## **The Decree**

The Prophet Daniel gave an astonishing prophecy of 70 weeks that would come to pass that would usher in the appearance of the Messiah.

Daniel wrote, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

***"Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.***

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“And *after* threescore and two weeks shall *Messiah be cut off*, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

“*And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease*, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.” (Daniel 9:24-27).

Notice the important point he reveals, “Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem *unto the Messiah the Prince shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:” (v.25). This shows that there are 62 weeks + 7 weeks—69 prophetic weeks (or 483 days). Applying the day-for-a-year principle (Num. 14:34; Ezek. 4:6), we arrive at 483 years from the decree until the *beginning* of Christ’s ministry.

The decree was made during the seventh year of Artaxerxes’ reign (457 B.C.). This date is historically well documented. The decree was actually implemented in the 7th month on the Feast of Trumpets, “457 B.C. in the reign of Artaxerxes...about 60 years after the temple had been completed” (Halley’s Bible Handbook, p.233).

By subtracting 457 from 483, we come to the year A.D. 26. When counting from B.C to A.D., astronomers correctly *add one* year since there is no year “zero,” while historians and chronologers generally neglect to do this. K. Down writes, “When a calculation crosses the BC/AD divide one must always *add a year*. This is because there is no year zero, but 1B.C. is immediately followed by 1 A.D. For example, from mid-way through 2 B.C. to mid-way through 2 A.D. is only three years, not four as one might have expected.” (Daniel; Hostage in Babylon, p.83, footnote 7, emphasis added). Adding one year brings us to A.D. 27—the prophesied year of the *beginning* of the ministry of the Messiah.

Now Luke 3:23 says, “And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age...” The context of this verse is after John the Baptist had begun his ministry and just before Jesus began His. Since Jesus was 30 years old in A.D. 27, He would have been born in 4 B.C. Remember, we must add one year to compensate for no year “zero.” Thus, from 4 B.C., advancing 30 years brings us to A.D. 27. This leads us to the next historical proof that further confirms when Christ was born.

### **The Death of Herod the Great**

Jesus, Matthew says, was born “in the days of Herod the king,” (2:1). When the “wise men” came to see Jesus, they “And when they were come into the *house*, they saw the *young child* with Mary his mother,” (v.11). They did *not* see a “babe” in “swaddling clothes” (Luke 2:12). They saw the “young child” meaning an “infant” “a little boy,” (Strong’s #3813; Thayer’s). The term “infant” is typically applied to “young children between *one month and one year of age*; however, definitions may vary and may include children up to two years of age.” (Infant Wikipedia <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infant>, emphasis added).

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Now according to the evidence in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was most likely one year of age when the wise men came. Herod, when he realized the wise men took another way home (v.12). "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, *from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.*" (v.16). Matthew Poole's Commentary states, "...if we take these words as they seem to sound, they would incline us to think that Christ was near two years old before the wise men came; *but some very learned men think they came within a year or little more, and that the term we translate 'two years old,' signifies persons that had never so little entered upon the second year of their age:* so as if a child were but a year and a week old, he was properly enough called diethv one of two years old, that is, who had *begun* his second year. Hence they think that the star appeared some little matter above a year before they came to Bethlehem; and considering at how great distance some parts in Arabia were from Jerusalem, they think that a year might well be ran out in their deliberations about, and preparations for, and dispatch of their journey. Thus they interpret the next words...**according to the time he had diligently inquired of the wise men**, that they had told them that it was something above a year since the star appeared first. This is now a middle way between those who (very improbably) think that they came within thirteen days, too short a time doubtless for such a journey, and those that think they came not till near two years, which to some seems as much too long." (Emphasis added). Jesus was mostly likely a year old when the slaughter of the innocents occurred. This brings us to 3 B.C.

King Herod is still alive in 3 B.C. Many claim that Herod died in 4 B.C. But the evidence today suggests the Herod died in 1 B.C. Josephus relates Herod's death to a lunar eclipse, (Antiquities 17.6.4). This is traditionally ascribed to the eclipse of March 13, 4 B.C. Since March 13, 4 B.C.E. was just one month before the Passover; some felt justified in placing all historical events associated with Herod's death and his funeral within that twenty-nine day period. *The truth is, however, it is completely illogical to squeeze the events mentioned by Josephus into that short period of time.* The proponents of the theory that Herod died in 4 B.C. pretend that the following events all happened within 30 days:

- 1) Part of Herod's body was putrefied and bred worms. He is taken on a round-trip to warm baths 16 km away.
- 2) He orders all important men in all villages to come to Jerusalem (120-30 km). His son Antipas is executed and Herod dies 5 days later.
- 3) There is a magnificent funeral, and the body is carried 37 km. A 7-day mourning period starts, followed by a funeral feast.
- 4) Another mourning period is planned and executed for the patriots killed.

The 29 days between the eclipse of 4 B.C. and the following Passover simply does not allow enough time for all of the above events to occur. A minimum of *ten weeks* would have been required as Ernest Martin and others showed very carefully. Therefore the 4 B.C. date fails to account for what Josephus recorded.

By selecting the wrong eclipse, modern scholars have been forced to tighten considerably the historical events into an abnormally compressed space of only twenty-nine days.

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Regarding the nature of this eclipse as well, “*Unfortunately*, this eclipse was visible only very late that night in Judea and was additionally *a minor and only partial eclipse*.” (Article, “Herod’s Death, Jesus’ Birth and a Lunar Eclipse” by Biblical Archaeology Society, emphasis added). It was not an eclipse that was really seen and remembered. However, “Josephus gave the single clue that a springtime Passover was celebrated not *long after* the eclipse. This would appear a reasonable hint that the eclipse happened *sometime in the early or late winter*.” (The Star of Bethlehem: chapter 8, Astronomy and the Death of King Herod, by Ernest L. Martin, emphasis added).

“There were no lunar eclipses visible in Judea thereafter until two occurred in the year 1 B.C.” (Article, “Herod’s Death, Jesus’ Birth and a Lunar Eclipse” by Biblical Archaeology Society).

The following table shows when they happened. For reference, see Solar and Lunar Eclipses of the Ancient Near East, by M. Kudlek and E. Mickler (1971).

### Solar Eclipses Visible in Palestine

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 7 B.C. | No eclipses  |
| 6 B.C. | No eclipses  |
| 5 B.C. | March 23. Total eclipse. Central at 8:30 pm (elapsed time between eclipse and Passover: twenty-nine days).                           |
| 5 B.C. | September 15. Total eclipse. Central at 10:30 pm (elapsed time between eclipse and Passover: seven months).                          |
| 4 B.C. | March 13. Partial eclipse. Central at 2:20 am (elapsed time between eclipse and Passover: twenty-nine days)                          |
| 3 B.C. | No eclipses  |
| 2 B.C. | No eclipses  |
| 1 B.C. | January 10. Total eclipse. Central at 1:00 am (elapsed time between eclipse and Passover: twelve and a half weeks). (Death of Herod) |

Some claim that Herod’s sons, between whom his kingdom was divided, dated their rule from 4 BCE (Josephus, Wars, 1.631–632.). However, Herod’s heirs *backdated* their reigns to 4 or 3 BCE. Archelaus, Antipas and Philip counted their reigns as starting in 4 BC. They did not actually reign in 4 BC, but *antedating was common*, as coins show, and Herod gave his kingdom to them *before* his death occurred in 1 B.C. (see Steinmann, Andrew “When Did Herod the Great Reign?,” *Novum Testamentum*, Volume 51, Number 1, 2009, pp. 1–29; Filmer, W. E. “Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great,” *Journal of Theological Studies* ns 17 (1966), 283–298). He most likely gave his sons the Kingdom in 2 B.C. and then died early 1 B.C. 3 B.C. according to the Gospels and history he was still in total power. 2 B.C. was most likely the time he gave power to his sons before his death.

Many scholars support the year of 1 B.C. for the death of Herod. (Edwards, Ormond. “Herodian Chronology,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 114 (1982) 29–42; Keresztes, Paul. *Imperial*

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Rome and the Christians: From Herod the Great to About 200 AD (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1989), pp.1–43; Vardaman, Jerry; Yamauchi, Edwin M., eds. (1989). "The Nativity and Herod's Death". *Chronos, Kairos, Christos: Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns: 85–92; Finegan, Jack. *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, Rev. ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998) 300, §516; B. MAHIEU – Between Rome and Jerusalem. Herod the Great and his Sons in their Struggle for Recognition in: *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 208 (Brill 2012) pp. 235-243; B. MAHIEU – Between Rome and Jerusalem. Herod the Great and his Sons in their Struggle for Recognition in: *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 208 (Brill 2012) pp. 235-243).

So Jesus' birth fits the time frame of the events of Palestine with the death of Herod and his sons. Jesus being born "in the days of Herod," 4B.C. Herod slaughtering the innocents in 3 B.C. Giving his sons his kingdom on 2 B.C. Then dying in 1 B.C.

### **High Priest Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate**

Now one can also pinpoint the timing of Messiah by the time frames of two historical characters, the High Priest Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate.

The gospels indicate that Jesus was crucified at the instigation of the first century high priest named Caiaphas (Matthew 26:3-4, John 11:49-53). We know that Joseph Caiaphas, the son-in-law of Annas, was appointed high priest by the Procurator Valerius Gratus in A.D. 26, and was "deposed" in "A.D. 36." (Mark Dunagan Commentary on the Bible).

All four gospels agree that Jesus was crucified on the orders of Pontius Pilate (Matthew 27:24-26, Mark 15:15, Luke 23:24, John 19:15-16).

We know from other sources when he served as governor of Judea--A.D. 27 to A.D. 37--so we can narrow down the range by several years. Pilate was governor. Some historical accounts, such as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, date Pilate's rule from A.D. 26 to 36 [add one year no year zero]. When he was recalled, he immediately sought help from his close political ally, Emperor Tiberius. Yet, while Pilate was en route to confer with him, Tiberius died, in A.D. 37. With Tiberius' death, Pilate's rule ended the same year. Therefore, Pilate's ten-year rule would have had to coincide with the years A.D. 27 to 37.

So Jesus ministry had to be during this time frame between 27 A.D. and 37 A.D.

### **The Reign of Tiberius**

Another major historical character to help pinpoint the time when Jesus ministry started was the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Luke 3:1 states, "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,"

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The reign of Roman Emperor Tiberius began about A.D. 11 or 12, since he reigned concurrently with Augustus Caesar for about 2 years (See Lardner's "Credibility," vol. i). "Luke reckons *from the time when he was admitted to share the empire* with Augustus Caesar." (Barnes Notes).

Tiberius succeeded Augustus in the empire, and began his "sole" reign Aug. 19th, 14 A.D. (Barnes Notes) If we add the 15 years of Tiberius' reign to A.D. 11 or 12, we arrive at A.D. 26 or 27. Here again we see the biblical chronology verified by history. The 15th year of Tiberius brings us precisely to the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry, which was just before the time of Christ's ministry. 27 A.D. was the time when Jesus made his appearance to the world!

Josh MacDowell in his book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* give another piece of historical evidence for the time in which the ministry of John the Baptist ministry began, he writes, "Among other historical references of Luke is that of Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene (Luke 3:1) at the beginning of John the Baptist ministry *in A.D. 27*. The only Lysanias known to ancient historians was the one who was killed in 36 B.C. However an inscription found near Damascus speaks of 'Freedman of Lysanias the tetrarch' and is dated *between 14 and 29 A.D.*" (p.72, emphasis added).

It's interesting that John began his ministry *first*, to pave the way for the 1st coming of Jesus. Notice what The Church of England quarterly review, Volume 21, writes about Jesus and John, "The only definite date in the evangelical history is in Luke 3:1, relating to the appearance of John the Baptist. *On the supposition that Jesus appeared in public half a year after John, as he was born half a year after him*, the designation of his age, in Luke 3:23, gives nearly the time of his birth." (p.211, emphasis added).

The ministries were about 6 months apart, the Gospels indicating that they began at the time near the date of their births. Jesus was born on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles in the autumn (Read our booklet *Is Christmas Christian* for details). Jesus "dwelt" should read "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14). 6 months *before* that, was the birth of John the Baptist in April during the Passover season. Since John was the prophesied Elijah to come it was only right for him to be born during Passover due to the fact that, "*Elijah's association with Passover festivities most likely stems from his association with the messianic age*. Elijah, according to Jewish belief, will be the forerunner of the Messiah. In preparation from the Messiah's coming, he will resolve doubts and restore peace to the earth. He is significant in the Passover because the Passover not only is a celebration of past deliverance but also looks to future freedom from bondage. *As the Jewish people look to Elijah for the resolution of doubts and as a bearer of peace, his ministry has become intimately intertwined with the Passover feast.*" (Article, "Jewish Traditions: Elijah and Passover" (Judaica World Archives, emphasis added).

27A.D. in the *autumn* was the time when Jesus was baptized and began his ministry. 457 B.C. in September was when the decree was given; and September 27 A.D. was the time when Jesus was baptized, *near* the time of his birth date on the Feast of Tabernacles, as Luke implies. This event of the beginning of his ministry by his *anointing* at his baptism took place *just before* his birth day on the feast of Trumpets.



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Notice what this source states, "In the Hebrew culture, baptisms were done, at this time in Hebrew history, on Yom Kippur, 5 days before the Feast of Tabernacles. The report of Luke is that Yeshua [Jesus] was about thirty years old, or *close to his birthday* when he was baptized by John the Baptist," (Ancient History: A Revised Chronology: An Updated Revision of Ancient history based on New Archaeology, Volume 2 By Anthony Lyle, emphasis his).

Another source says, "bathing in the Mikvah [took place] before the feast of Trumpets the Jewish new year" (Jewels in the Sand, by Peggy Dameron, p.72). So during the time of the Feast of Trumpets or Yom Kippur in September/October 27 A.D. Messiah was anointed, exactly 483 years from Sept/October 457 B.C.

The Prophet Daniel said, "Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah [Messiah means "Anointed One"]the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks:" 69 weeks would come to pass and after the termination of the 69 weeks Messiah would begin his ministry. Jesus was anointed at his Baptism by John the Baptist in Matthew 3:15-17.

A trumpet was a symbol of an announcement, or glad tidings about a certain event that was to come (Isaiah 58:1; Matthew 11:17; Luke 7:32). Lifting up a voice like a trumpet to announce good news is what happened on that day at the feast of Trumpets. The greatest voice of all, God the Father said through an arch angel, "And lo a *voice from heaven*, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:17).

### **Time of Construction of the Temple**

As mentioned, Christ was 30 years old (Luke 3:23) when He began His ministry in A.D. 27. Now, we will see how the chronology of the temple harmonizes with the chronology of Christ: "And the *Jews' Passover* was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem... Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign show You unto us, seeing that You do these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, *Forty and six years was this temple in building*, and will You rear it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body" (John 2:13, 18-21).

This occurred on the *first* Passover during Christ's ministry, in A.D. 28. The Jews said that the temple had been under construction for 46 years.

In Antiquities, Josephus wrote, "And now Herod, in the eighteenth year of his reign... undertook a very great work, that is to build of himself the temple of God..." (Bk. XV, ch. xi, sec. 1). From 19 B.C., we advance 46 years since the beginning of the reconstruction of the temple, arriving at A.D. 28—the first Passover after the beginning of Christ's ministry.

Philip Schaff rightly adding one year to compensate for no year "zero," this means that the temple's construction began in 19 B.C., the 18th year of Herod's reign, he states, "It was at the *close of the year 20 B.C. or the beginning of 19 B.C.* that Herod the Great began the rebuilding of the temple. The temple itself was completed in eighteen months; the extensive buildings round it required eight years more. *So many additions, however, proved necessary before the work*



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*could be regarded as finished*, that the final completion is assigned by Josephus to the year 50 A.D., seventy years after the commencement of the undertaking, and but twenty years before Jerusalem was destroyed. ***The 'forty and six years' bring us to the year 28 A.D...*** (Popular Commentary of the New Testament, emphasis added).

With this statement the Cambridge Greek Testament for schools and Colleges admits that Luke's dating of the reign of Tiberius begins with *the joint reign* with Augustus in 12 A.D., "Zerubbabel's was rebuilt by Herod the Great. 'The building of the Temple, we are told by Josephus (Ant. XV. xi. 1), was begun in the 18th year of Herod the Great, 734-735 A.U.C. Reckoning 46 years from this point, we are brought to 781 or 782 A.U.C. = 28 or 29 A.D. Comparing this with the data given in Luke 3:1, the question arises, whether we are to reckon the 15th year of Tiberius *from his joint reign with Augustus, which began A.D. 12; or from his sole reign after the death of Augustus, A.D. 14*. This would give us A.D. 27 or 29 for the first public appearance of the Baptist, and at the earliest A.D. 28 or 30 for the Passover mentioned in this chapter.' So that there seems to be exact agreement between this date and that of S. Luke, if we count S. Luke's 15 years from *the joint reign of Tiberius*." (Emphasis added).

### **The Length of Jesus' Ministry**

Now that we understand the date of September 27 A.D. at the feast of Trumpets as the time of the beginning of the ministry of Jesus-how long did his ministry last?

Some argue that it lasted only a year. One such proof is in Luke 4. Jesus in the synagogue quoted from Isaiah and said, "The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, *"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*

"And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

"And he began to say unto them, *This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" (Luke 4:18-21).

The scriptures speak of "*To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*" Some conclude that this indicates that Jesus ministry was only one year.

But this language does *not* indicate any length of the year of his ministry *but* "The year," that is "the *welcome* year. Either the Jubilee year (Lev 26:8-17), or on account of the Lord's ministry ***commencing then.***" (Bullinger's Companion Bible). It was "the year" that the ministry *starts*-that year was a jubilee year when captives are set free. It was a perfect time to begin the greatest ministry of grace ever performed in the history of the world.

Other sources agree: "The year, or definite appointed period, when the Lord is gracious, not without a reference to the year of jubilee, which also pointed to the Messiah's coming and kingdom. *It proves nothing as to the length of our Lord's ministry.*" (Jamieson Fausset and Brown Commentary, emphasis added).

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“(eniauton Kuriou dektion). *He does not mean that his ministry is to be only one year in length as Clement of Alexandria and Origen argued. That is to turn figures into fact. The Messianic age has come, Jesus means to say. On the first day of the year of Jubilee the priests with sound of trumpet proclaimed the blessings of that year (Lev 25:8-17). This great passage justly pictures Christ's conception of his mission and message.*” (Robertson's Word Pictures, emphasis added).

Another argument for a one year length of Jesus' ministry is the fact that the synoptic Gospels only record *one trip to Jerusalem* during his public life. Normally, a pious Jesus would be expected to go to Jerusalem for each Passover but *only one trip for Passover* is reported in Gospel of Mark.

Why do the synoptic Gospels only record one Passover and not three like the Gospel of John?

The reason being, is, “Matthew, Mark, and Luke speak only of one Passover, that at which Jesus suffered; and from this it would follow that our Lord's ministry continued at most only about six months. John expressly enumerates three Passovers, and more probably four, during Christ's ministry; which therefore must have had duration of at least two and a half years, **and more probably of three and a half**. Again, *Matthew, Mark, and Luke place the scene of Jesus' public ministrations chiefly in Galilee; whence he goes up to Jerusalem only just before his death. John, on the other hand, narrates the miracles and discourses of our Lord as occurring principally at Jerusalem, on various former occasions as well as at his last visit.* The apparent difficulty arising from the first difference is at once set aside by the remark that although the three Evangelists do expressly mention only one Passover, *yet they do not anywhere, nor in any way, affirm, or even imply, that there were no more; while the testimony of John is express and definite.*” (A Harmony of the Four Gospels in English. According to the Common Version, by Edward Robinson, p.155, emphasis added).

This source states: “*None of them will have thought that the ministry lasted only one year and all three would have taken it for granted that Jesus made several visits to Jerusalem*” (Jesus of Nazareth: An independent historian's account of his life and teaching By Maurice Casey, p.181). The focus of the synoptic Gospels was different from that of the Gospel of John. They more focused on the Galilean ministry of Jesus, and then focused on the last week of Christ and that last *most important* Passover for obvious reason-this was the time he died for the sins of the world! Whereas John focused more on Jesus in Jerusalem.

But is there evidence in the synoptic Gospels of a ministry longer than a year? Absolutely!

The source above continues, “And further, the incident, narrated by all the three writers, of the disciples' plucking ripe ears of grain as they went through the fields necessarily presupposes the *recent occurrence of a Passover during our Lord's ministry*, different from the one at which he suffered; and this is further confirmed by Luke's mention of the ‘second Sabbath after the first’ in the same connection. See Matt. 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1. See also the Note on § 37. [Comp. the Note on § 25, and the margin of Luke 6:1. Whatever be the meaning of the last passage, the incident must have occurred *in early summer, or spring; hence shortly after a Passover not mentioned by these three writers.*]” (ibid, p.155, emphasis added).

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Here a Passover is NOT mentioned by Matthew, Mark and Luke-But a Passover took place!

Luke said, "And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first," This was, "The original expression here, εν Σαββατω δευτεροπρωτω, says Dr. Whitby, 'should have been rendered, In the first sabbath after **the second day, namely, of unleavened bread; for, after the first day of the passover**, (which was a sabbath, Ex 12:16,) ye shall count unto you (said God) seven sabbaths complete, Lev 23:15, reckoning that day for the first of the week, which was therefore called, δευτεροπρωτον, *the first sabbath from this second day of unleavened bread; (the 16th of the month;)* the second was called δευτεροδευτερον, the second sabbath from that day; and the third, δευτεροτριτον, the third sabbath from that second day; and so on, till they came to the seventh sabbath from that day; that is, to the forty-ninth day, which was the day of Pentecost. The mention of the seven Sabbaths, to be numbered with relation to this second day, answers all that Grotius objects against this exposition. Epiphanius expressly says, Our Lord's disciples did what is here recorded, τω σαββατω, τω μετα την ημεραν των αζυμων, on the sabbath following the [second] day of unleavened bread. And if Pentecost was called the feast of harvest, Ex 23:16, (as Bochart, Mr. Mede, Dr. Lightfoot, and the Jews say,) because then their barley and wheat harvest was gathered in, this feast could *not* be Pentecost, as Grotius conjectures, because then the corn must have been gathered in, and therefore could not have been plucked by Christ's disciples in the field.' *There are other expositions of the phrase, but this seems by far the most probable.* He went through the corn-fields, &c. This paragraph is largely explained in the notes on Matt 12:1-8; and Mark 2:23-28." (Joseph Benson's Commentary, emphasis added). This is one of many sources that have come to this conclusion that this took place after the Passover which is NOT mentioned by the synoptic writes but did occur.

Notice what Richard L. Niswonger states in his book, New Testament History, "Actually the synoptics *do not require a ministry limited to one year time period.* The lack of mention of more than one Passover *cannot* be taken as conclusive evidence that the era of Jesus' activity could not have included several Passover feasts...*If Mark omitted the mentioning of the Passover by name on this occasion [Mark 2:23] he could have left other Passovers unrecorded. One cannot assume the passage of only one year with any certainty.*" (p.153, emphasis added).

The history of the public ministry of Jesus itself suggests a longer time than a year that we can glean from the Gospels themselves.

The Gospel of Mark and the feeding of the 5000 this itself implies at least two years of Jesus' ministry. Richard L. Niswonger explains, "Mark might be understood to *require at least a two year ministry* because at the occasion of the feeding of the 5000 Jesus had the people sit down on the 'green grass' [Mark 6:39]. All four Gospels recount the story of the feeding of the multitude in a grassy area, BUT ONLY Mark adds the adjective 'green,' which implies another spring time...But if one leaves the synoptics and takes into account the parallel story in the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel any ambiguity ends because John asserts that 'the Jewish Passover Feast was near' (6:4)" (ibid, p.153, emphasis added). This Passover was the third Passover mentioned before the 4th Passover-the Passover that Jesus was crucified (John 11:55; 12:1; 18:28; 19:14).

Just by putting all the events in the Gospels together reveal a much ministry than a year for the ministry of Christ. This source states: "The history of the public ministry of Jesus, as we know it

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from the four gospels, suggests a *longer time for its accomplishment than twelve months*. The way in which Jesus went about his work, gathering a few choice men about him, unfolding to them gradually his thought of the kingdom of God, leading them step by step toward - an understanding of his mission and an ability to assist him in its performance, seems to make *probable a longer time than one year*. Moreover, his method of giving the gospel to the people - *first the simpler truths of it, and gradually more and more, in order that they might assimilate it a little at a time* - suggests more than one year.

“Furthermore, the development of the opposition to him by the Pharisees and Sadducees, which *progressed from stage to stage* until it reached its culmination in his death, *speaks for a longer time than a single year...*” (The Chronology of Jesus' Public Ministry by Clyde Weber Votaw, The Biblical World, vol.26, N.6 (Dec 1905 pp.429-430, emphasis added). All these events that took place during the duration of the ministry of Jesus, this could not have taken place within a one year time frame. The means of communication is not as fast as it is today. There were no phones, T.V. internet, emails etc... It was word to mouth, as Jesus appearances in the towns, and the things he did afterwards the word spread from place to place at a much slower pace.

A.T Robertson in his Harmony of the Gospels speaks of *just* Jesus' Galilean ministry and says, “We cannot confidently determine the length of the ministry in Galilee. We are not sure whether it began in summer or late autumn (see footnote 7 in Explanatory Notes at end of Harmony). If the feast of John 5:1 was a Passover or there is an unknown Passover, the Galilean ministry lasted at *least sixteen months*, for it ended when another Passover was near (John 6:4). Otherwise we should not certainly know that it lasted more than some six or eight months. About the two subsequent periods of our Lord's ministry we shall find no room to question that each lasted six months; but here we have to admit much uncertainty as to the time. After all, a determination of the time employed would be a matter of very little importance to our study of this period. *But the immense amount of material in this period argues for a length of over a year.*” (footnote, p.68, emphasis added).

So one can conclude that the synoptic Gospels in no way rule out *other Passovers* that took place during the time of the ministry of Christ. The Gospel writers do not mention the Passover even though evidence in the Gospels reveal that one took place, so this can be no foundation to believe that Jesus ministry was only for one year. Finally, the *events* in Jesus ministry call for more than a year duration, of the Pharisees opposition, the Galilean ministry *alone* being a year in length, and teachings of Jesus Christ including his miracles.

### **John's Gospel in the Answer**

The Gospel of John is the Gospel that pieces together the duration of the ministry of Christ.

John's Gospel mentions that Jesus attended at least three Passovers, which took place once a year in the spring and died on the 4<sup>th</sup> Passover:

- There was a Passover in Jerusalem at the start of his public ministry (John 2:13, 23).

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- There is an unnamed Feast in John 5:1. A.T. Robertson in his *Harmony of the Gospels* proves it's a Passover as well as John Lightfoot in his *Commentary of the NT from the Hebraica and the Talmud*.
- There was a Passover in *Galilee* midway through his public ministry (John 6:4).
- There was a final Passover in Jerusalem at the end of his public ministry, that is, the time of his crucifixion (John 11:55; 12:1).

One of the obvious differences in chronology between John's gospel and the 'Synoptics' (Matthew, Mark and Luke) is that John gives an account of Jesus in Jerusalem on five different occasions, three during a Passover (John 2:13; 5:1; 12:1, 12), the unnamed festival (John 5.1) is a Passover, one at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-2, 14) during the Galilean part of his ministry, and one at Hanukkah (John 10.22). The third Passover is mentioned in relation to the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6.4.

If one follows the Gospel of John one can understand the duration of the ministry of Christ. These events reveal that the ministry lasted 3 ½ years that started in 27 A.D. at the Feast of Trumpets in September when he was baptized.

Then comes the first Passover in the spring (**6 months after Jesus anointing**) of 28 A.D., "*This beginning of miracles* did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

"After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

"And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem... Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did." (John 2:11-13, 23). This Passover was obviously the beginning of his ministry.

Then comes the second Passover (**1 year and 6 months after Jesus anointing**) in John 5:1 in 29 A.D. Its unnamed as it says, "After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." Robertson writes, "The Passover has always met with many adherents, being the second Passover in the Saviour's ministry and making four in all (John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 12:1). An unnamed Passover may exist in the ministry even if not referred to here. The arguments in favor of this interpretation are the most satisfactory. We cannot consider them as absolutely conclusive, *yet the Passover meets all sides of the case better than any of the other feasts...* (b) It is fairly implied (John 5:1) that the feast took Jesus to Jerusalem. The Passover would more likely be the one to lead him there. It is expressly stated that he attended two Passovers and a special reason is given for his not attending a third. If there was another Passover in his ministry, this would naturally be the one. (c) This suits best the hostility manifested at this feast, which would have time to become acute (Broadus' Comm. on Matt.) and break out with increased vigor in Galilee and prevent his attending the next Passover (John 6:4; 7:1). (d) If this Passover be a second Passover of the ministry, sufficient time is afforded for the great Galilean ministry without artificial crowding. His ministry would be long enough to allow the great work recorded as done by him." (*Harmony of the Gospels* footnote pp.304-305).



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John Lightfoot goes further to say, “The first he speaks of John 2:13; the third, John 6:4; the fourth, John 13:1; and the second, in this place. It is true he does not call it by the name of the Passover here, but only a feast in general. *However, the words of our Saviour mentioned above, John 4:35, do give some kind of light into this matter.*”(Commentary of the NT from the Hebraica and the Talmud)

Jesus said, “Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest?” (John 4:35). This harvest to take place in 4 months was “The beginning of the *harvest [that is, the barley-harvest]* was about the middle of the month Nisan. Consult Lev 23:10; etc., Deut 16:9.” (ibid).

This was the Passover which was the unnamed feast (John 5:1) that came after Jesus said these words. As Lightfoot concludes, “Now let us but reckon the *four months* backward from the beginning of the barley-harvest, or the *middle of the month Nisan*, and we shall go back to the middle of the month Chisleu; which will fall in with the beginning of our December, or thereabout: *whence it will be easy to conjecture what feast that was of which mention is made, John 5:1.*” (Emphasis added). Obviously John 5:1 is Passover.

The third Passover which takes place in 30 A.D. (**2 years and 6 months after Jesus anointing**) is mentioned in relation to the feeding of the 5,000 in John 6.4. “And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.” All four Gospels record this proving that the synoptics *do not mention* the Feast of Passover, but it did take place, and this was the *third Passover* during the ministry of Christ, so Jesus ministry could not have been a year in duration. It was also during this year that Jesus made a trip to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-2, 14). So here a trip to Jerusalem takes place however it is *not mentioned* by the synoptic Gospels. Also, in Luke’s account, written in Greek, makes clear which Sabbath this was. The Greek term, *deuteroproton sabbaton*, literally means “the second Sabbath of the first”—or the second high day of that Passover season.

Now did Jesus observe this Passover? John says it was “nigh,” when he fed the 5000. It wasn’t *on* the Passover. *As Jesus went from Galilee to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (John 7:1-3, 10, and 14) - then obviously he did go from Galilee to Jerusalem for the Passover as well.*

Then the fourth and final Passover in 31 A.D. (**3 years and 6 months after Jesus anointing**) of Christ’s ministry is the most documented Passover of all. All four of the gospels cover it in detail. Notice Luke 22:1-2: “Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people.” John 11:55 records, “And the Jews’ Passover was near at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves.”

Christ’s final Passover completed His earthly ministry of 3½ years. Again, it began in the autumn of A.D. 27 and ended in the spring of A.D. 31, on a Wednesday—in the “midst of the week.” A.T Robertson states, “This feast of John 5:1 was most probably a Passover (see note at end of volume, note 7). *If so we should know that our Lord’s public ministry lasted three years and a fraction*, and that the great ministry in Galilee lasted some 18 to 20 months. Otherwise, we should know of only two years and a fraction for the former, and 6 to 8 months for the latter; as John gives three Passovers beyond question (John 2:13; 6:4; 12:1), and our Lord’s ministry began some time before the first of these” (p.83, emphasis mine).



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Richard L. Niswonger writes that, "A recent harmony of the Four Gospels edited by Robert L. Thomas and Stanley N. Gundry argues for the *traditional view* of a three and a half year ministry." (New Testament History p.154, emphasis added). Many scholars as well as older commentaries have clung to, and proven this view that Jesus ministry lasted for 3 1/2 years.

### **70th Week of Daniel's Prophecy (For More details read our booklet Daniel's 70 Weeks)**

In 31 A.D. Jesus was crucified on a Wednesday not a Friday-this was in the "midst of the week" as prophesied by Daniel.

These are the dates of the Passover from the authority of the experts (from Darkness at the Crucifixion by A. Alfieri):

| <u>Year</u>                             | <u>Passover Dates</u>  | <u>Authority</u>  | <u>Day of the Week</u>                |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 27<br>AD                                | April 9th  | Robert Anderson   | Wednesday                             |
| 28<br>AD                                | April 28th   | Richard Parker  | Wednesday                             |
| 29<br>AD                                | April 16, 17,<br>18 <sup>th</sup>  | Anderson, Fotheringham  | Sat, Sun, Monday                      |
| 30<br>AD                                | April 5, 6, 7th  | Anderson, Fotheringham, & others.   | Wed, Thurs,<br>Friday                 |
| <b>31<br/>AD</b>                        | <b>March 27<sup>th</sup>,<br/>April 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>Anderson, Fotheringham (Tues)<br/>Joachim Jeremias, Richard Parker (Wednesday)<br/>Jeremias (Thurs).</b> | <b>Tues,<br/>Wednesday,<br/>Thurs</b> |
| 32<br>A.D                               | April 13, 14   | Humphreys, Anderson, Parker   | Sun, Mon                              |
| 33<br>AD.                               | April 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> ,<br>May 2 <sup>nd</sup>         | Anderson, Fotheringham, Humphreys, Parker   | Friday, Sat,                          |
| <b>Dates of the Passover in History</b> |  |   |                                       |

In his book Anthony Alfieri proves in great detail that Wednesday April 25th 31 A.D. was the date of the crucifixion! Even Julius Africanus who is credited as the earliest Christian chronographer says "Jesus died in the 5531st year from Adam (AD 31)" (Kurt Simmons Date of the Birth of Christ, p.306)

Daniel's prophecy reveals that the Messiah would, "confirm the covenant with many for *one week*: and in the *midst of the week* he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease," (9:27). This last week was a 7 year period, and in the midst of it 3 1/2 years Messiah would cause the oblation to cease which he did by his sacrifice. We do not need to sacrifice lambs and bulls any longer, Jesus sacrifice was sufficient to solve the sin problem, as Daniel says at the beginning of this prophecy that 70 weeks were determined, "to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity," (v.24).

Daniel's Prophecy *specifically* reveals 70 weeks are "determined" for Israel. It's *one unit* in time! Verse 24 sums up exactly what will happen during this time of seventy weeks.

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The remainder of this prophecy vv.25-27 shows that the seventy-weeks are composed **in three segments**. The first consists of 'seven weeks" (49 years); the second consists of "threescore and two weeks" (434 years); and the third consists of "one week" (seven years). Even though they are divided into three segments, the events are consecutive not divided in gaps. 490 years were to transpire and within this 490 year time frame these three segments of time were to take place. There are no gaps as some believe. There is no gap between (49 years) and (434 years), no gap between (434 years), and (7 years). These segments were to run *one after another*. There are divided into three segments for the simple reason, different events were to take place during those three segments of time.

49 years was to restore Jerusalem after the decree and "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." (v.25)

434 years to be a time of over 400 years of silence before the revelation of Jesus. This is similar to the time when Moses was called and Israel was delivered from Egypt at Passover after 430 years (Ex 12:40-41) of silence from God. Jesus at the Passover after 434 years delivered them out of the bondage of sin and spiritual Egypt (John 8:34; Rev 11:8).

Jesus said, "The law and the prophets *were* until John: *since that time* the kingdom of God is preached..." (Luke 16:16). During those silent years, from 408 B.C. onward is very significant and important. After this, began a long gap between the Old and New Testaments: "The book of Nehemiah describes this time of rebuilding. By 408 BC things were *ready*, so the long wait of 62 weeks (or 434 years) began. This long silence is the gap between Malachi and Matthew, as the *Jewish nation waited for the Messiah to come...*" (Daniel chapter 9 By Richard Gunther, emphasis added). Malachi was the Last prophet of the Old Testament "*since that time*" Jesus said the "Law and the Prophets" were *preached*, and then came John who preached the fulfillments of those prophecies and the revealing of the Messiah in 27 A.D. The silence was over; the "voice" crying in the wilderness began at the end of those 434 years.

The Last 7 Years was the ministry of the Messiah "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness" (v.24).

This source states: "Since *there is no gap* between the first seven weeks and the following sixty-two weeks (the first and second divisions of the total period), *it comes as a surprise to find an extraordinarily long gap posited to exist between the second and third division...*The length gap...breaks the *natural continuity* of the prophecy...Vitranga cautioned long ago 'that the period of seventy hebdomads, or 490 years, is here predicted *as one* that will continue *uninterrupted* from its commencement to its close or completion, both with regard to its entire period of seventy hebdomads, and also to the several parts (7, 62, 1), into which the seventy are divided.' And the question has been raised, 'How can one imagine there is an interval between the sixty-nine and the one, when these together make up the seventy?' ...In the connection the observation of P. Mauro is significant because he has shown that there is '*an absolute rule, admitting of no exceptions*, [namely] that when a definite measure of time or space is specified by the number of units composing it, within which a certain event is to happen, or a certain thing is to be found, the units of time or space which make up that measure are to be understood as running

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*continuously and successfully.* This is based on the observation that the 430 years of Gen 15:13, Exodus 12:20, Gal 3:17; the 40 years of the wilderness wandering of Numbers 14:34; and the seven years of plenty and of famine of Gen 45:6 were respectively CONSECUTIVE YEARS. The three days after which Jesus was to arise were also consecutive. Since these time periods were consecutive, the *natural thing* would be to expect the 70 weeks of [Daniel] 9:24-27 likewise to be 70 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS” (F. Holbrooke, pp.22-23, emphasis added).

Understanding that this was 70 *consecutive* weeks of time, Daniel says, “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease,” (9:27). Who is the “he” in this verse? “Messiah, who is the principal *subject* of the prophecy;” (Barnes Notes, emphasis added).

“If we take the pronoun ‘He’ as relating to ‘the Messiah’ mentioned in the preceding verse, then we find in the New Testament scriptures a perfect fulfillment of the passage... That pronoun must, in our opinion, be taken as *referring to Christ*, because (a) the prophecy is all about Christ, and this is the climax of it; (b) Titus did not make any covenant with the Jews; (c) there is not a word in Scripture about any future ‘prince’ making a covenant with them...” (The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation; A Study of the Last Two Visions of Daniel, and of the Olivet Discourse of the Lord Jesus Christ Philip Mauro, emphasis added).

Richard Gunther gives his reasons for the “He” being Messiah: “The context:

- 1) The flow of the prophecy is focused on the Messiah and no-one else,
- 2) The structure of the passage. *It would violate good grammar to read it any other way.*
- 3) The link between ‘he’ and the ‘Messiah’ is very strong. For other examples of a similar link see 2 Chron.21:5-8, 1 Kings 13:1, 2; Mark 2:13, 14 and 7:34-36.” (Daniel chapter 9).

The “He” is the Messiah that “shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.” For 7 years he “confirms the covenant.” Paul wrote, “Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to *confirm the promises made unto the fathers:*” (Rom 15:8).

Then Daniel says, “in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease” (v.27)

Barnes Notes writes, “The word here rendered ‘in the midst’ - חֶסֶת chētsîy - means, properly, half, the half part, Ex 24:6; Num 12:12; then the middle, or the midst, Jdg 16:3. The Vulgate renders it, in dimidio; the Greek, ἐν τῷ ἡμίσει en tō hēmisei. Hengstenberg, ‘*the half.*’ So Lengerke, die Hälfte; Luther, mitten. The natural and obvious interpretation is what is expressed in our translation, and that will convey the essential idea in the original. It refers to something which was to occur at about the *middle portion of this time*, or when about half of this period was elapsed, or to something which it would require half of the ‘one week,’ or seven years, to accomplish. *The meaning of the passage is fully met by the supposition that it refers to the Lord Jesus and his work, and that the exact thing that was intended by the prophecy was his death, or his being ‘cut off,’ and thus causing the sacrifice and oblation to cease.*” (Emphasis added).

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Not only was Jesus crucified in the midst of the last 7 years—he was crucified in the *middle of a literal week*. Passover in 31 A.D. took place on a Wednesday. Then 3 days and nights later resurrected on a Sabbath afternoon.

After that, Jesus and the final half of that last week (3 ½ years), he spent establishing his church, setting the foundations of it, and it ended with the stoning of Stephen in the autumn 34 A.D. (Acts 7:59-60).

Dr. Hales (Chronol. vol. 1. pp. 96—101. 2nd ed.) takes the game view of the events of the “one week” of the seventy and considers the baptism of Jesus to have taken place in the autumn of A.D. 27, the crucifixion in the spring of A.D. 31, and the martyrdom of Stephen in the *autumn* of A.D. 34; Bishop Pearson also thinks that Stephen was martyred A.D. 34, and Paul converted on his journey to Damascus at the close of A.D. 35. (Annul. Paul, in Oper. Posth. p. 1). This event of the stoning of Stephen had to have taken place *before* 36 A.D. As noted the high priest Caiaphas and Annas were high priest during that time. In Acts 7:1 the “high priest” that was in power during the stoning of Stephen was “... probably still Caiaphas, as at the trial of Jesus; he remained in office until A.D. 36.” (F. F. Bruce, The Book of Acts p. 144, emphasis added).

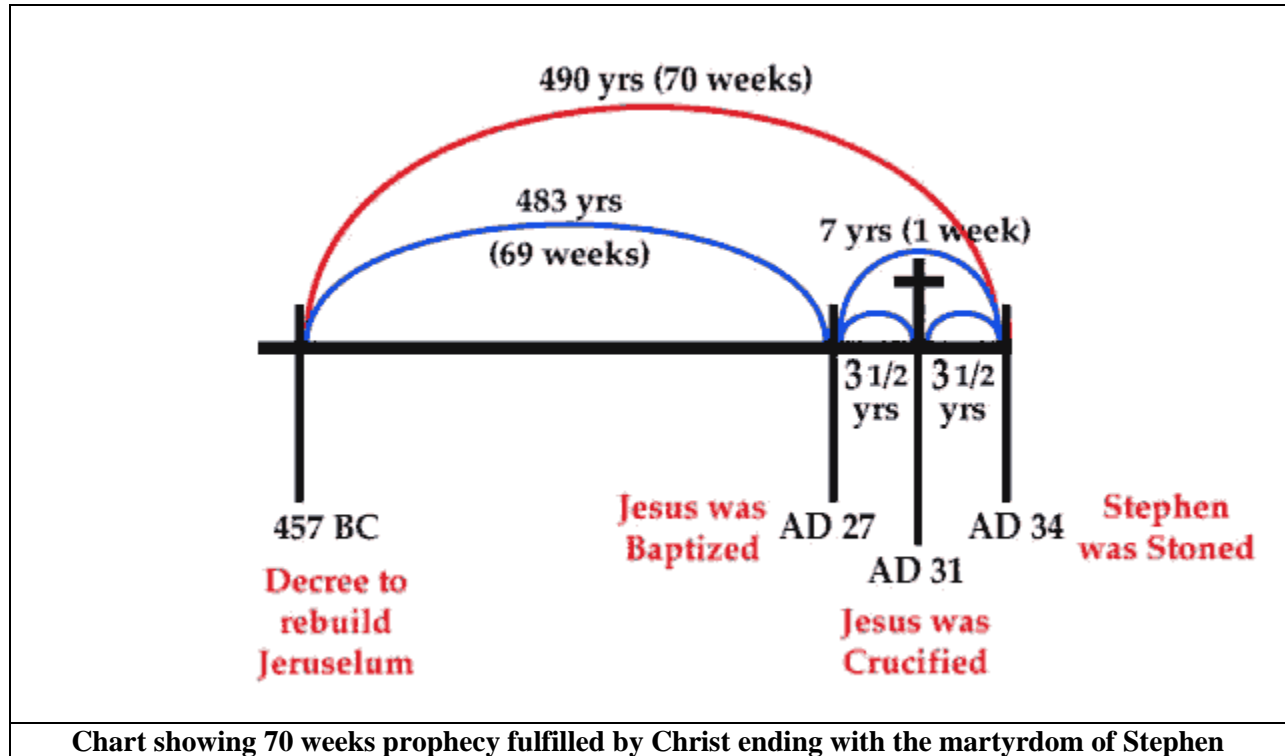
Expository Notes of Dr. Thomas Constable states that, “The ‘high priest’ probably refers to Caiaphas, the official high priest then, but possibly Luke meant Annas (cf. Acts 4:6). [Note: See my comments on 5:6.] Jesus had stood before both these men separately to face similar charges (John 18:13-14; John 18:24; Matthew 26:57). This was the third time that Christian leaders had defended their preaching before the Sanhedrin that Luke recorded in Acts (cf. Acts 4:15; Acts 5:27).”

“Since Caiaphas was not deposed *until* 36 A.D., it seems that *he was* the high priest presiding over this [Stephen’s] trial.” (Mark Dunagan Commentary on the Bible; see also Halley’s Bible Handbook, p.566).

Caiaphas was deposed in A.D. 36 and Annas’ son Theophilus was appointed High Priest in 37 A.D. So the stoning of Stephen had to have take place *before* 36 A.D.

Stephens’ death took place in 34 A.D. in the *autumn* some say near the time of the Day of Atonement. Jesus Baptism which began the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel’s prophecy was in the autumn as well on the feast of Trumpets, exactly 7 years that prophecy was fulfilled!

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### Church History

Some in ancient Christianity believe that Jesus ministry lasted 3 1/2 years.

In his “Demonstratio Evangelica” (published before 311) VIII, 106, 8, Eusebius stated, “Now the whole period of our Savior’s Teaching and working of Miracles *is said to have been three-and-a-half years, which is half a week.* John the Evangelist, in his Gospel, makes this clear to the attentive. One week of years therefore would be represented by the whole period of His association with the Apostles, both the time before His Passion, and the time after His Resurrection. *For it is written that before His Passion He shewed Himself for the space of three-and-a-half years to His disciples and also to those who were not His disciples: while by teaching and miracles He revealed the powers of His Godhead to all equally whether Greeks or Jews.* But after His Resurrection He was most likely with His disciples a period equal to the years, being seen of them forty days, and eating with them, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, as the Acts of the Apostles tells us. So that this would be the prophet’s week of years, during which He ‘confirmed a covenant with many,’ confirming that is to say the new Covenant of the Gospel Preaching. And who were the many to whom He confirmed it, but His own disciples and Apostles, and such of the Hebrews who believed in Him? *And moreover, half through this week, during which He confirmed the said Covenant with many, the (401) sacrifice and libation was taken away, and the abomination of desolation began, for in the middle of this week after the three-and-a-half days of His Teaching, at the time when He suffered, the Veil of the Temple was torn asunder from the top to the bottom, so that in effect from that time sacrifice and libation were taken away, and the abomination of desolation stood in the holy place,*

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inasmuch as the Being had left them desolate, Who had been from time immemorial till (b) that day the guardian and protector of the place” (Book 8, chapter 2, 136, emphasis added).

Eusebius also writes, “Since, then, he (Jesus) began in the high priesthood of Annas and continued to the reign of Caiaphas the intervening time *does not extend to a full four years.*” (History of the Church (published 311-325) I, 10, 2, emphasis added).

Origen believed in a one year ministry. However in his commentary on Matthew later believed in a three year ministry of Jesus. (Book 24:15). In his *Contra Celsum* he says that Judas was with Christ for three years, “while Judas did not remain so much as three years with Jesus.” (Book 2, chapter 12).

Others like Clement of Alexandria called for a one-year ministry. (The Stromata I, 21)

Irenaeus “opposed the view of those who maintained that Jesus ministry lasted only one year. He asserted that it lasted much longer” (The Duration of Jesus Ministry, Solomon Zeitlin (Jewish Quarterly Review, vol.55, No.3 (Jan 1965) p.182) source *Contra Haereses*, 2:22.5)

“It is evident that the early church fathers were at *variance* as to the duration of Jesus’ ministry as well as to the year of the crucifixion.” (ibid, p.183, emphasis added). What we see is a mixed bag of beliefs like today due to ignorance or misunderstanding of the Gospels accounts.

Eusebius of Cesarea, also writes in his History of the Church (published c.316), book III, 24, 8: “For it is evident that the three [synoptic] evangelists *recorded only* the deeds done by the Saviour for one year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist.” Did he believe in a one year ministry, or is he just saying that the recorded events in *those* Gospels were only for a year?

However some came across the truth of the Gospels and the prophecy of Daniel and understand that Jesus ministry was just over three years like Eusebius. The point being that some believed in a 3 ½ ministry of Christ and it was known by the ancients, and is also know by the scholars of the reformation and post reformation like Keil, Pusey, Kliefoth, Jamieson, Faucett and Brown, Auberlen, Strong, Havernick, Hengstenberg, Hofmann, Delitzsch, Wright, Boutflower, Young, and many others.

So the Ministry of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel’s last week to the latter. It can be confirmed in the Gospels and in history. For 3 1/2 years Jesus labored for the salvation of mankind, and to make an end of sins. The last 3 ½ years to establish his church to do the work of God till he comes.