

GRACE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A CHRONOLOGICAL VIEW  
OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO  
DR. H. W. BATEMAN  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR  
NEW TESTAMENT STRUCTURES

BY

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BOX 54

WARSAW, INDIANA

MAY, 1998

## CHRONOLOGICAL VIEW OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

### *The Difficulty of Dating Christ*

Jesus Christ is the central figure in the Christian faith. He walked this planet almost two millennia ago. He certainly lived in history. But exactly when did he live? What was his birthday? What was his death date? Such questions are important for understanding this Jesus of history. “The backbone of history is chronology. . . chronology is a science of time. It seeks to establish and arrange the dates of past events in their proper sequence. Thus chronology serves as necessary framework upon which the events of history may be fitted.”<sup>1</sup>

The examination of the chronology of Jesus’ life carries great difficulty. The Gospel writers did not affix a specific date to any of the details of Christ’s life. They provided sweeping ranges and background details. Evidently, even the Gospel writers did not know his exact age as seen in the following comment by Luke, “Now Jesus himself was **about** thirty years old<sup>2</sup> when he began his ministry” (3:23, bold for emphasis).<sup>3</sup> Luke was mere decades removed from Jesus’ earthly life. He also “investigated everything carefully from the beginning” (Lk 1:3), yet did not precisely date the events of Christ’s life. The uncertainty of the Gospel writers has not become clearer with time.

The present state of New Testament chronology is one of uncertainty. The goal of chronology is to attain the greatest certainty possible concerning the times when specific events occurred. In the life of Jesus, for example, it would be of the greatest value to know:

1. What was the day, month, and year in which Jesus was born?
2. When did Jesus’ family go to Egypt and when did they return?
3. When did Jesus begin his public ministry?
4. When was Jesus crucified?

It is impossible in the present state of affairs to know the answers to any of the above questions. It is even hazardous to try to reach any consensus among New Testament scholars as to when any of these events took place.<sup>4</sup>

In light of the present despair about the precise dating of Christ, what ought one to do? The

present writer would suggest recognizing the sovereign hand of God in this mystery. How? God intentionally chose *not* to reveal a specific date, otherwise an explicit statement of the date would appear in the Gospels or somewhere else in the New Testament canon.

Why would God not want His people to know the precise dates? Because God intimately understands man's nature. Consider the following New Testament example. Paul sent a letter of stinging rebuke to the believers in Galatia. In short, Paul exhorts the Galatians to understand the complete work of Christ and warns them not to follow former traditions. Paul clearly communicates the trappings of tradition, "Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?" (Gal 4:9). He goes on to explain how the Galatians are beginning to endanger themselves, "You are observing special days and months and seasons and years!"(4:10). In the same way, God knew that men are easily entrapped by traditions, so He did not explicitly state the dates of Christ. If a precise date of Jesus birth, death, and resurrection were known, man would inevitably celebrate the days more than the Lord of them. See how our world presently celebrates the dates "assigned" for Christ's birth and resurrection. Instead of such misplaced celebration, God himself intended to be celebrated. Man can freely celebrate Him more than a particular day. He deserves devotion, not special days, months, and years. Therefore, God blessed His people by *not* clarifying the exact dates. We are His people and most likely would fall victim to the traditional dates just like His Old Testament people did. He made it difficult to identify the precise dates of our Lord's life. He did this for His people's protection.

Please understand this writer's purpose is not to "spiritualize" ignorance. The purpose of the prior discussion is to magnify God and His protection of His people. He cares for us in our weakness. What great honor is due Him!

Another sovereignty issue is the fact that the Gospel writers did not have a precise chronological account in mind. Luke communicates the desire to “write an orderly account” (Lk 1:3), but it doesn’t necessarily follow that an orderly account in an exact chronology. Chronology wasn’t the intention of the Gospels, Christology was. In spite of their lack of intent to communicate chronology, there are enough background details in the Gospels to construct a relatively accurate chronological picture of Christ’s life. What a blessing to receive those details even though it was outside of the intentions of the Gospel writers!

So is there value in pursuing the actual dates of Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection? Certainly! The Scriptures makes clear that Jesus was historically on this globe. He was not a myth. No doubt concerning his physical presence on earth is warranted from the Gospel accounts. If Jesus was truly on earth at some point in history, it only makes sense to endeavor to determine the exact time. Surely fixed dates exist for the time Jesus was on earth. Attempting to determine the precise dates of Jesus’ time on earth has great value.

#### *The Assumed Chronological Framework*

Many New Testament scholars also see the value in the chronological dating of Christ’s life. Although the Gospels do not explicitly state the important dates of the life of Christ, plenty of background information is available. Many scholars weigh the evidence throughout their work and finally come to a conclusion about chronological issues. Weighing all of the evidence helps one make a decision regarding the chronology. As this author has weighed the evidence at hand, he become comfortable within a chronological framework. Rather than set out to prove it point by

<b>Date (Julian Calendar)</b>	<b>Christ's Age</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Scripture References</b>
April 13-27, 5 BC*	Birth	Jesus' birth, visit of the Shepherds	Mt 2:1; Lk 2:6-20
May 24-June 8, 5 BC	1-2 mos.	Visit of the Magi	Mt 2:1-12
Late April to mid-June, 5 BC	1-2 mos.	Flight to Egypt	Mt 2:13-23
March, 4 BC	almost 1	Herod the Great's death	Mt 2:19
Sometime after March, 4 BC	1+	Return from Egypt to Nazareth	Mt 2:20, Lk 2:39
April 13-27, 1 BC	4	Included to illustrate absence of the year "0"	
April 13-27, AD 1	5	Included to illustrate absence of the year "0"	
April, AD 8	12	Jesus left at the temple as a child (Passover)	Lk 2:40-52
AD 18	22/23**	Caiaphas became high priest	
AD 26	29/30	Pilate arrived in Judea	
AD 29	32/33	Fifteenth year of Tiberius (by Roman reckoning), extending from January 1-December 31 AD 29	
Early AD 29	32/33	John the Baptist began ministry	Lk 3:1
April 13-27, AD 29	33	Christ's birthday	
Autumn AD 29	33	Christ's baptism and start of public ministry. "About" thirty (Lk 3:23).	Lk 3:23
April, AD 30	33/(34)***	Christ's first Passover	Jn 2:13-20
April, AD 31	34/(35)	Christ's second Passover	
October 21-28, AD 31****	35	Christ at the Feast of Tabernacles	Jn 5:1
April, 32	35/(36)	Christ's third Passover	Jn 6:4
September 10-17, 32	36	Christ at the Feast of Tabernacles	Jn 7:2, 10
December 18, 32	36	Christ at the Feast of Dedication	Jn 10:22-39
<i>March 28-April 3, 33</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>Christ's Final Week</i>	<i>Mk 11:1-15:20</i>
Friday, April 3, 33	36	Crucifixion	Mk 15:21-41

\* The date is joined by "-" to show the approximate range of birth date. This range will be continually listed, rather than an exact date.

\*\* The "/" indicates: before birthday (before April) / after birthday (after April).

\*\*\* The "(" indicates the possible age if Passover occurred after Christ's birthday.

\*\*\*\* The AD dating will be understood throughout the remainder of the table.

<b>Date (Julian Calendar)</b>	<b>Christ's Age</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Scripture References</b>
Saturday, April 4, 33		Joseph of Arimathea buries Christ	Mk 15:42-47
Sunday, April 5, 33		Christ resurrected	Mk 16:1-8
May 14, 33		Christ's ascension	Acts 1

point, the framework will be stated and assumed from the beginning of the paper. Additional support and argumentation will be included as deemed necessary. The prior page contains a table outlining the authors understanding of the chronology of the life of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

The sequence of Christ's life, as outlined in the Synoptic Gospels<sup>6</sup>, contains five major stages: (1) Birth, (2) Childhood, (3) Commencement of Public Ministry, (4) Duration of Ministry, and (5) Passion Week. This paper will work through these seven stages to chronologically order the events of Jesus' life.

### ***Birth***

The birth narrative is only recorded in Matthew and Luke. The prediction of Jesus' birth is in abbreviated form in Matthew (1:18-25). The actual birth receives only indirect mention: "But he [Joseph] had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, . . ." (Mt 1:25-2:1).

Luke, on the other hand, includes a great deal of material regarding the prediction and birth of Christ. In addition to information regarding Jesus, Luke intersperses the prediction and birth of John the Baptist in the infancy narrative. Luke builds a parallel between John the Baptist and Jesus. Repeatedly, Luke bounces between John and Jesus.<sup>7</sup> See the APPENDIX for a visual illustration of Luke's parallels.

The greatest difficulty with the birth of Christ deals with its precise dating. Narrowing the time frame down can be done with four datum: (1) Herod's death, (2) Herod's decree to kill all two-year old males, (3) the Syrian governor, Quirinius' availability, and (4) Jesus' age to be "about" thirty when He began ministry. Herod is generally considered to have died early in 4 BC. If Herod commanded all boys two years and younger to be killed, then Christ was probably not born any earlier than 6 BC. Regarding Quirinius, "we know that in the early AD Years Quirinius was Governor of Syria, and during the years 6-3BC he was somewhere "in the East"( a passing comment by Tacitus)."<sup>8</sup> Thus we have a range from 6 BC to 4 BC and any birth date with it, would certainly measure up to be the Lucan "about thirty."

This author is a bit more precise. Any further explanation is done in the chart and endnotes. See below.

Events Surrounding the Birth of Jesus			
Prediction of John's birth	Lk 1:5-22		April 5-19, 4 BC <sup>9</sup>
Elizabeth became pregnant	Lk 1:23-25	Probably days later, no more than eight days. <sup>10</sup> Then she remained in seclusion for five months (1:24).	April 13-27, 4 BC
Prediction of Jesus' birth	Mt 1:18-24 Lk 1:26-38	Occurs in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (1:26).	October 13-27+, 4 BC
Mary visits Elizabeth	Lk 1:39-56	She goes immediately after receiving the prediction, "at that time" (1:39), and remains there "about three months" (1:56). <sup>11</sup>	October 13-27+ through early January 5 BC
		Obviously, nine months after conception	January

Events Surrounding the Birth of Jesus			
John's Birth	Lk 1:57-80	(1:24). About three months prior to Jesus' birth.	13-27, 5 BC
Jesus' Birth	Lk 2:1-7 Mt 1:25	Approximately three months after John's birth (1:26). In the time of King Herod (Mt 2:1). Also the days of Caesar Augustus, who issued a decree to take a census, which was the first census while Quirinius was governor of Syria (Lk 2:1).	April 13-27, 5 BC <sup>12</sup>
Shepherd's visit Jesus	Lk 2:8-20	Occurred on the night of Jesus' birth. "Today <sup>13</sup> . . . has been born" (2:11).	"
Circumcision	Lk 2:21	Jesus circumcised on the eighth day.	April 20-May 4, 5 BC
Presentation of Jesus at the Temple	Lk 2:22-38	Presentation in Jerusalem after 40 days from birth. <sup>14</sup>	May 22-June 6, 5 BC
Visit of the Magi	Mt 2:1-12	Evidently Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to Bethlehem because that is where the chief priests and Herod directed the Magi (2:4-8).	May 24-June 8, 5 BC

### ***Childhood***

The childhood of the boy Jesus is predominantly unmentioned. From the bits and pieces which are available, the best grasp of Jesus' life in this period is possible. See chart below:

Events Surrounding the Childhood of Jesus			
Visit of the Magi	Mt 2:1-12	Evidently Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to Bethlehem because that is where the chief priests and Herod directed the Magi (2:4-8).	May 24-June 8, 5 BC



Events Surrounding the Childhood of Jesus			
Flight to Egypt	Mt 2:13-18	The “when they had gone” <sup>15</sup> seems to indicate prompt action.	Late May-mid-June, 5 BC
Death of Herod	Mt 2:19	Strong evidence from Josephus on date. <sup>16</sup>	March, 4 BC
Return from Egypt to Nazareth	Mt 2:20-23 Lk 2:39	“After Herod died” (Mt 2:19), and “when Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Lord” (Lk 2:39). <sup>17</sup>	Sometime after March, 4 BC
Jesus’ fourth birthday		Included to illustrate absence of the year “0”	April 13-27, 1 BC
Jesus’ fifth birthday		Included to illustrate absence of the year “0”	April 13-17, AD 1
Growth of Jesus	Lk 2:40	“The child grew and became strong. . .”	4 BC-AD 8
Jesus left at Temple	Lk 2:41-51	At Passover when He was twelve.	April, AD 8
Maturing of Jesus	Lk 2:52	“Jesus grew in wisdom and stature. . .”	AD 8+
Jesus in obscurity		No mention of events until the commencement of Jesus’ ministry.	AD 8 - AD 29

### ***Commencement of Public Ministry***

After hiding for “about” thirty years, Jesus bursts onto the scene. His commencement is captured in the table below.

Events Surrounding the Commencement of Jesus’ Ministry			
Caiaphas became high priest	Lk 3:2	Luke begins John’s ministry “during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.”	AD 18 <sup>18</sup>
Pilate arrives in Judea	Lk 3:1	Luke begins John’s ministry “when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.”	AD 26 <sup>19</sup>

Events Surrounding the Commencement of Jesus' Ministry			
Commencement of John's ministry	Mt 3:1-12 Mk 1:1-8 Lk 3:1-20	John was baptizing and foretelling of Isaiah's messiah in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. <sup>20</sup> See two entries above.	Early AD 29
Christ's 33rd birthday		"About thirty" from Lk 3:23 is workable.	April 13-27, AD 29
Baptism of Jesus / Commencement of Ministry	Mt 3:13-17 Mk 1:9-11 Lk 3:21-22	Luke links the baptism and the beginning of His ministry . Note 3:21-23.	Autumn, <sup>21</sup> AD 29
Temptation	Mt 4:1-11 Mk 1:12-13 Lk 4:1-13	Follows His baptism, "Then" <sup>22</sup> (Mt 4:1) and Mark "At once" <sup>23</sup> (1:12). He was tempted for forty days (Mk 1:13).	Autumn, AD 29 (+ 40 days)
Return to Galilee	Mt 4:12 Mk 1:14 Lk 4:14	He was victorious over temptation, then returned to Galilee to begin public ministry after John was imprisoned.	Autumn, AD 29 + 40 days

### ***Duration of Christ's ministry***

The Synoptics include very few chronological markers. The last Passover (at the conclusion of the Passion) is obviously noted. The only other Passover mentioned is in Luke 2:41 referring to Jesus and family making the annual trip to Jerusalem for the Passover. Are there any other chronological checkpoints in the Synoptics?

The disciples are recorded as walking through the grainfields and picking some grain to eat in all three Gospels (Mt 12:1, Mk 2:23, Lk 6:1). McCallum delivers the following explanation:

In view of what we know about agriculture at that time, we know that this would have to be in the Spring time. We know that they harvested at about the end of May, after planting in March or April. Since Passover takes place in the Spring, we know that approximately 1 year (at least 10 months) had to pass between the reference to the Spring and the reference to the last Passover.<sup>24</sup>

Another affirmation of springtime can be found in the "condition of grass when the Five

Thousand were fed” (Mt 14:15; Mk 2:23; Lk 9:12).<sup>25</sup>

The first chronological marker in the Synoptics is the baptism of Jesus in the autumn preceding the disciples’ picking of grain. Therefore, the Synoptic Gospels conclusively speak of Jesus ministry being somewhat over a year in length.

Inasmuch as the synoptic gospels may have allowed one Passover to go unmentioned, it could very well be that they allowed other Passovers to go unmentioned. Another possibility is that the synoptic records may have covered only a part of a longer ministry- the part deemed most important. Thus, Christ’s ministry may have been several years in length.<sup>26</sup>

Christ’s ministry was certainly longer than one year. John mentions at least three Passovers (2:13; 6:4; 11:55) and may imply a fourth in John 4:35.

In that verse Jesus referred to a harvest (April or May) which was four months away. That would mean that He made His statement around January or February. In between the time of the statement and the time of the harvest a second unmentioned Passover would have fallen. This would make a total of four Passovers during Christ’s ministry.<sup>27</sup>

Such a conclusion lends support to the Three-Year theory of Christ’ ministry. Such a view is not new, it was affirmed by Melito of Sardis (d. *ca.* 190) and Eusebius (*ca.* 260-340).<sup>28</sup> Hoehner lists other reputable men who also hold to this view: Ogg, Robertson, Armstrong, Hendriksen, Madison, and Guthrie.<sup>29</sup> He goes on to summarize why he also affirms the Three-Year view:

The one-year theory for the duration of Christ’s ministry is not at all plausible if one takes the Gospel of John seriously. The two-year view is based upon the transposition of John 5 and 6 for which there is no textual or any other kind of evidence. The four-year view is built upon suppositions for which there is no evidence. The three-year ministry has good bases from both the Synoptics and the Gospel of John. Therefore the three year ministry of Jesus from the first Passover to the passion Passover is the most viable option. Of course, since Jesus’ baptism and public ministry preceded the first Passover, the total length of his ministry would be about three and a half years.<sup>30</sup>

Hoehner also has a solid outline of the events demarcated by Passovers in *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ*, p. 60-63 which could be included here..

### ***Christ's Final Week***

The Passion narratives are the height of the Gospels. The chronology of the week gets less clear the farther one gets from the actual crucifixion--that is earlier in the week. The following chart will outline the proceedings. Consult the endnotes for argumentation of certain positions this author has chosen.

Events During the Passion Week <sup>31</sup> Saturday, March 28 - Friday, April 3, AD 33			
Arrival in Bethany, Anointing by Mary	Jn 12:1-8 <sup>32</sup> Mt 26:6-13 Mk 14:3-9	"Six days before the Passover Jesus arrived" (12:1)	Saturday, March 28
Crowds come to see Jesus and Lazarus	Jn 12:9-10	Probably the next day, despite the <i>NIV</i> "Meanwhile" (12:9). <sup>33</sup>	Sunday, March 29
Triumphal Entry	Mt 21:1-9 Mk 11:1-10 Lk 19:29-40	Typically thought of as "Palm Sunday," but there is a good chance it was Monday. See note 34.	Monday, March 30
Jesus' View of the City	Mt 21:10-11 Mk 11:11 Lk 19:41-44	Jesus wept over Jerusalem	Monday, March 30
Cursing of the Fig Tree	Mt 21:18-19 Mk 11:12-14		Tuesday, March 31
Cleansing of the Temple	Mt 21:12-13 Mk 11:15-19 Lk 19:45-48		Tuesday, March 31
Healing in the Temple	Mt 21:14-17	The only affirming action of Jesus recorded on Tuesday	Tuesday, March 31
The Withered Fig Tree	Mt 21:19-22 Mk 11:20-25	Delayed illustration of faith	Wednesday, April 1
Controversy	Mt 21:23-22:46 Mk 11:27-12:37 Lk 20:1-44		Wednesday April 1
Condemnation of the Scribes and Pharisees	Mt 23:1-29 Mk 12:38-40 Lk 20:45-47		Wednesday, April 1
Jesus' Observation of the Widow	Mk 12:41-44 Lk 21:1-4		Wednesday, April 1
	Mt 24-25		Wednesday,

Events During the Passion Week <sup>31</sup> Saturday, March 28 - Friday, April 3, AD 33			
Olivet Discourse	Mk 13:1-37 Lk 21:5-38		April 1
Prediction of Crucifixion	Mt 26:1-5 Mk 14:1-2 Lk 22:1-2	"The Passover is two days away" (Mt 26:2)	Wednesday, April 1
Betrayal Contract	Mt 26:14-16 Mk 14:10-11 Lk 22:3-6	Judas' agreement for money	Wednesday, April 1 <sup>34</sup>
The Passover Meal	Mt 26:17-29 Mk 14:12-25 Lk 22:7-30		Thursday, April 2
In the Garden	Mt 26:30, 36-46 Mk 14:26, 32-42 Lk 22:39-46		Thursday, April 2
Betrayal Kiss and Arrest	Mt 26:47-56 Mk 14:43-52 Lk 22:47-53		Thursday, April 2
Trial before Caiaphas	Mt 26:57, 59-68 Mk 14:53, 55-65 Lk 22:54, 63-65		Thursday, April 2
The Denial of Peter	Mt 26:58, 69-75 Mk 14:54, 66-72 Lk 22:54-62		Thursday, April 2
Trial before Sanhedrin	Mt 27:1 Mk 15:1 Lk 22:66-71		Thursday, April 2
Death of Judas	Mt 27:3-10		Thursday, April 2
Trial before Pilate	Mt 27:2, 11-14 Mk 15:1-5 Lk 23:1-5		Friday, April 3
Before Herod	Lk 23:6-12		Friday, April 3
Return to Pilate	Mt 27:15-26 Mk 15:6-15 Lk 23:13-25		Friday, April 3
Mockery by Soldiers	Mt 27:27-30 Mk 15:16-19		Friday, April 3
The Way to the Skull	Mt 27:31-34 Mk 15:20-23 Lk 23:26-32		Friday, April 3
	Mt 27:35-56 Mk 15:24-41		Friday,

Events During the Passion Week <sup>31</sup> Saturday, March 28 - Friday, April 3, AD 33			
Crucifixion	Lk 23:33-49		April 3
Burial	Mt 27:57-60 Mk 15:42-46 Lk 23:33-49		Friday, April 3
Women at the Tomb	Mt 27:61 Mk 15:47 Lk 23:55-56		Saturday, April 4
The Guard	Mt 27:62-66		Saturday, April 4
He's Alive! The Women's Visit	Mt 28:1-8 Mk 16:1-8 Lk 24:1-12		Sunday, April 5
The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus	Mt 28:9-20 (Mk 16:9-18) Lk 24:13-49		Sunday, April 5
The Great Commission	Mt 28:18-20 (Mk 16:19-20) Lk 24:50-53		Days or weeks later
Ascension	Acts 1		May 14, AD 33

## NOTES

APPENDIX

Parallel of Jesus and John the Baptist in Luke Chapters 1-2		
<b>JOHN THE BAPTIST</b>		<b>JESUS</b>
Prediction of John's birth	1:5-25	
	1:26-38	Prediction of Jesus' birth
Elizabeth visited by Mary	1:39-45	Mary goes to meet Elizabeth
	1:46-56	Song of Mary
John's Birth	1:57-64	
Neighbors wonder & spread the word	1:65-66	
Song of Zechariah	1:67-79	
Growth of John	1:80	
	2:1-7	Jesus' Birth
	2:8-20	Shepherds wonder & spread the word
	2:21-38	Circumcision in Jerusalem
	2:39-52	Growth of Jesus



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## *Ministry in Galilee*

A threefold division exists in Jesus' Galilean ministry: (1) Prior to the Appointment of the Twelve, (2) Appointment of the Twelve till Leaving Capernaum, and (3) Arrival in Northern Galilee to Departure towards Jerusalem.<sup>35</sup> Autumn, AD 29 + 40 days

Events Surrounding Jesus' Ministry in Galilee Part I Prior to the Appointment of the Twelve <sup>36</sup>			
<i>Events</i>	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>
Return to Galilee after Temptation	4:12	1:14	4:14
First Rejection in Nazareth			Lk 4:16-31
Move to Capernaum	4:13-16		
First Galilean tour	4:17		
Calling first disciples	4:18-22	1:16-20	5:1-11
A Day of Work	8:14-17	1:21-34	4:31-41
Traveling and Preaching		1:35-39	4:42-44
Miracles and Discourses	8:1-4 9:1-7 12:1-21		

1. Harold W. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), p. 9.

2. The Greek text reads ὥσεί ἐτῶν τριάκοντα. Literally "approximately thirty years." ὥσεί Either appears as a comparative conjunction (meaning "like," "as," "as though," or "as it were") or an adverb. This occurrence is adverbial, meaning "a degree which approximates a point on a scale of extent, either

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above or below - 'about, approximately.' ὡς: ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὡς χιλιάδες πέντε 'the number of men came to about five thousand' Ac 4.4. ὡσεὶ: ὡσεὶ λίθου βολήν 'about a stone's throw' Lk 22.41." (J. P. Louw, and E. A. Nida. *Louw-Nida Greek-English Lexicon Based on Semantic Domains*, 2d ed., (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1988). Retrieved through *BibleWorks™ for Windows™*. Michael S. Bushell, Hermeneutika, 1995.)

For a thorough discussion of the possible and unlikely renderings of this verse see Renald E. Showers "New Testament Chronology and the Decree of Daniel 9" *Grace Journal*. 11, no. 1 (1970), p.32-34.

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4. Jerry Vardaman, "Jesus' Life: A New Chronology," in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos: Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan*, eds. Jerry Vardaman and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), p. 55-56.

5. This view is gleaned as an adaptive synthesis from others, particularly Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects*; Colin J. Humphreys, "The Star of Bethlehem, A Comet in 5 BC and the Date of Christ's Birth." *Tyndale Bulletin*. 43, no. 1 (1992), p. 31-56; Colin J. Humphreys and W.G. Waddington, "The Jewish Calendar, A Lunar Eclipse and the Date of Christ's Crucifixion," *Tyndale Bulletin* 43, no. 2 (1992), p. 331-351, also by Humphreys and Waddington "Astronomy and the Date of the Crucifixion" in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos: Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan*, eds. Jerry Vardaman and Edwin M. Yamauchi (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989), p.165-181; Paul L. Maier "The Date of the Nativity and the Chronology of Jesus' Life" in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos*, p. 113-130; and also supported by Jack Finegan *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1964) p. 270, 301.

6. John's Gospel will not be considered in this study except at appropriate points. This paper will attempt to trace the life of Jesus based on the Synoptic Gospels.

7. See Darrell L. Bock *Luke: Luke 1:1-9:50*. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 1, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House Co., 1994), p. 68-69 for more thorough discussion.

8. Dennis McCallum, "Chronological Study of the Life of Christ." April 4, 1998, <http://www.xenos.org/classes/chronc.htm>

9. This date and the other ones leading up to Christ's birth are approximated based on the range this author assumes for the birth of Christ.

10. Shepard explains the priestly affair, "The priesthood had been well organized after the return from Babylon. At this time there were 20,000 priests, divided into twenty-four courses. Zacharias belonged to that of Abijah which was the eighth. Each course did duty for **eight days**, all joining in on the Sabbath. . . ." (bold for emphasis). J. Dwight Pentecost *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ: A Study of the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), p. 41 citing J. W. Shepard, *The Christ of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946), p. 20-21.

11. It certainly seems curious why Mary appears to have left Elizabeth prior to the birth of John. After three months of a building friendship, it would make sense for Mary to stay until the baby was born.

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12. For a thorough explanation of this date see Colin J. Humphreys, “The Star of Bethlehem, A Comet in 5 BC and the Date of Christ’s Birth.” *Tyndale Bulletin*. 43, no. 1 (1992), p. 31-56, esp. 52-53 for the precise range of April 13-27, 5 BC.

13. The term σήμερον clearly means “today” or “this day.” It is used 40 times in the NT and always is rendered with such a meaning (e.g. all the Synoptic references: Mt 6:11, 6:30, 11:23, 16:3, 21:28, 27:8, 27:19, 28:15; Mk 14:30; Lk 4:21, 5:26, 12:28, 13:32, 13:33, 19:5, 19:9, 22:34, 22:61, 23:43).

14. “According to Mosaic law the mother of a male child was unclean. On the eighth day the boy was circumcised but she remained unclean for thirty-three more days, after which she presented a burnt offering and a sin offering for her cleansing (Lev. 12:4-6)”. From notes in the *Ryrie Study Bible, NIV* (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1986), p. 1405, note on Lk 2:22, “the time of their purification.”

15. This phrase “when they [the Magi] had gone” in Greek is Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν. There does not seem to have a great deal of time elapse between the leaving of the Magi and the dream. The root ἀναχωρέω is used only 14 times in the New Testament, most frequently by Matthew (10 of the 14 uses = 72%). The root is used repeatedly by Matthew for “went away” or “with draw” and seems to indicate prompt action.

16. See Humphreys, *Star of Bethlehem*, p. 41 for an excellent summary of why Herod died in the Spring of 4 BC and no later than March 4 BC. For more detail see Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects*, p. 101-111.

17. The Lucan reference to “when Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, . . .” allows room for the Matthean account of the flight to Egypt. Joseph and Mary were “required” to go to Egypt through Joseph’s dream (Mt 2:20).

18. Date purported by Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects*, p. 143.

19. Ibid.

20. The precise date of the fifteenth year of Tiberius can be interpreted in five different ways (See Hoehner, p. 31-36). Hoehner deduces rightly and states “either of the last two methods would be most probable, and would make the beginning of John’s ministry between August 19, 28, and December 31, 29.” Using the accession year Roman reckoning (Hoehner’s interpretation number four, p. 35-36) nails the date down the January 1-December 31, 29.

The chief argument for this view of reckoning is that since the combined work of Luke-Acts is addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3) who is saluted as κράτιστε, a term Luke otherwise employs only as a form of address to a Roman official (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 25:25), it is probably therefore that the writing is addressed to Roman readers or to those under Roman dominion, who would be familiar with the Julian calendar. (Hoehner, p.36)

Maier (*Date of the Nativity*, p.124) also affirms the accession year Roman reckoning.

21. Finegan (*Biblical Chronology*, p. 273) asserts that “because of the extreme heat in the Jordan depression [valley] during the summer, it is likely that John performed the major part of his ministry there during the spring and fall.” Cited from Showers, *NT Chronology*, p. 32. Hoehner (*Chronological Aspects*, p.143) lists the commencement as sometime in the “summer/autumn A. D. 29”, but Finegan’s hypothesis makes better sense.

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22. Matthew's word-- Τότε "Then"-- makes the Temptation account follow the baptism chronologically.
23. The Greek is Καὶ εὐθὺς which may be better translated "And immediately."
24. McCallum, "Chronological Study."
25. William P. Armstrong "Chronology of the New Testament," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, edited by James Orr, *et al.*, I (1929), 647.
26. Showers, *NT Chronology*, p. 36 citing Finegan, *Biblical Chronology*, p. 283.
27. Ibid.
28. Hoehner, *Chronological Aspects*, p. 55.
29. Ibid. See Hoehner's footnotes for citations of the supporters.
30. Ibid., p. 59-60.
31. This chart relies heavily on Merrill C. Tenney *New Testament Survey*, p. 208-209.
32. John sets the details for the last week of Christ better than the Synoptics, so it is included here.
33. The Greek is οὖν about which Louw and Nida have the following definition: " (a) therefore 89.50; (b) indeed 91.7; © but 89.127; 89.50 οὖν ; μενοῦν: markers of result, often implying the conclusion of a process of reasoning - 'so, therefore, consequently, accordingly, then, so then.'"
 

The *NIV* interprets the οὖν "therefore, then" as immediate or "meanwhile." The NASB translates the verse (12:9) more literally: "The great multitudes **therefore** of the Jews learned that He was there. . ." (bold for emphasis). The NASB and literal rendering do not require the gathering of crowds immediately. It is reasonable to assume it took some amount of time (certainly not too long) for the word to be passed around town. Since this is true, it would also seem reasonable that the crowds gathered a day later--Sunday. Also of note is the following verse (12:10), which requires some amount of time for the chief priests to hear the news and to have a meeting where they plot to murder Lazarus. It also appears unlikely that all of 12:9-11 would occur after supper (δέιπνον) was eaten (12:2).

The following day, Sunday, seems more likely for the crowd gathering and chief priest plotting than Sunday seems Hoehner concurs (p. 143). Such a conclusion also helps resolve the difficulty of *nothing* occurring on Wednesday. In a week as well documented as the Passion, it seems quite odd for nothing of note to be recorded two days (i.e. Wednesday) before Jesus died.

If the crowd gathering was Sunday, then everything in the week is pushed back a day, eliminating the vacant Wednesday. Such a move also bumps "Palm Sunday" to being "Palm Monday."
34. Ironically for those who view no record of events on Wednesday (e.g. Tenney, *NT Survey*, p. 209), it seems that Christ had a very, very busy day.
35. The threefold division has been suggested by Walvoord, "Earthly Life," p. 294.

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36. This chart relies heavily on Merrill C. Tenney *New Testament Survey*, p. 206-207.