

Dating the death of Jesus

Abstract. The dating of Jesus death is well documented in the Gospels as he died on Friday 14 Nisan in 33 CE. This dating is easy to determine since Jesus was baptized in 29 CE (Luke 3:1-23), celebrated 4 Passovers (John 1:28-32; 2:13; 5:1; 6:4; 12:1) and was killed on Friday 14 Nisan (John 16:31). In addition, when he died there was a (partial) lunar eclipse, described as "blood into moon" (Acts 2:20), dated on Friday 3, April 33 CE¹, which was viewed in Jerusalem from 5:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. according to astronomy. Paradoxically, this dating is now disputed, with some preferring the year 30 CE or even 29. Those who challenge the traditional date (33 CE) arbitrarily assume that the Bible contains errors and contradictions. An examination of all the arguments shows instead consistency of chronological data from the Bible and inconsistency of assumptions from opponents. In addition, chronological examination of the famous Messianic prophecy in Daniel 9:25 involves the death of the Messiah on April 3, 33 CE.

The dating of Jesus' death on Friday 3 April 33 CE has long been accepted, both by religious authorities (for example in 1933, with the extraordinary Jubilee proclaimed by Pius XI to celebrate the 1900th anniversary of the death of Jesus) and by historians², but it is currently assumed in 30 CE by the official Bible of Catholicism (the Jerusalem Bible³), or even 29 CE by some researchers. The study by Depuydt⁴ on this subject is representative of the arguments used. He began his study by stating that since the beginning of 20th century the date 29 CE is almost universally accepted, which is obviously false (moreover in science the truth is not measured in the ratings). He then asserts that evangelical sources are contradictory, some placing the death of Jesus at the beginning of the day and others at the end of the day and then at the beginning of 15 Nisan. In fact this idea arises from a misunderstanding of the biblical reckoning. Passover was to be celebrated on the night of 14 Nisan according to the text of Exodus 12:1-8 and among the Jews, evening (marked by sunset) is prior to morning (Genesis 1:5-31) contrary to the Julian calendar in which the morning is prior to the evening. Thus this festival took place at the beginning of 14 Nisan, or at the end of 13 Nisan around 18 hours and not at the end of 14th (and early 15th Nisan).

Meier, in his book: *Jesus, A Marginal Jew. Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, devotes much of his research to determine the exact date of Jesus' death and suggests, too, contradicting the biblical timeline: *As a corollary, I would add two advantages to the solution I propose which contradicts the synoptic chronology*⁵. This hypothesis is unlikely, because if Jesus and his disciples celebrated the Passover on Nisan 13 or 15 they would have been in breach of the official calendar of the Temple, which is inconceivable given the legalism that prevailed at the time⁶. Luke's text gives the time of Jesus' ministry (unlike that says Depuydt) as fixed in the year 15 of Tiberius (Luke 3:1-4,21-23), from 19 August 28 CE to 18 August 29 CE. Jesus' baptism is located 6 months after that one of John the Baptist (Luke 1:34-36), between 19 February and 18 August 29 CE. Regarding these texts, a duration of 3 years and 6 months covers the period from the fall of 29 CE to spring 33 CE.

¹ J.P. PRAIT – Newton's Date for the Crucifixion
in: *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society* 32:3 (1991), pp. 301-304.

² G. GOYAU – Chronologie de l'empire romain
Paris 2007 Éd. Errance p. 46.

³ ÉCOLE BIBLIQUE DE JÉRUSALEM – La Bible de Jérusalem
Paris 1986 (imprimatur 23 juillet 1973) Éd. Cerf p. 1821.

⁴ L. DEPUYDT – The Date of Death of Jesus of Nazareth
in: *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 122:3 (2002) pp. 466-480.

⁵ J.P. MEIER – Un certain juif Jésus Les données de l'histoire I
Paris 2004 Éd. Cerf pp. 235-262.

⁶ So it is unlikely that the Essenes living away from the Temple and who proposed a dissident schedule have actually practiced it. Indeed, their solar year with only 364 days instead of 365 was out of sync with the observation and would have included 5 days late after only 4 years and so 50 days late after 40 years!

The four gospels describe several events that can be located in time (holidays, seasons, specific periods). The parallel of these data allows the following chronological reconstruction (datable benchmarks are highlighted):

year			Event situated in time	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
29	15	1	X				
		2	XI				
		3	XII				
		4	I Beginning of John the Baptist's ministry (in the 15th year of Tiberius).	3:1-12	1:1-18	3:1-18	1:6-28
		5	II				
		6	III				
		7	IV				
		8	V Baptism of Jesus (in the 15th year of Tiberius).	3:13-17	1:9-11	3:21-38	1:32-34
	[16]	9	VI Jesus, born in -2, is aged about 30 years (29 CE).				
		10	VII Beginning of Jesus' ministry				
		11	VIII				
		12	IX				
30		1	X				
		2	XI				
		3	XII				
		4	I Shrine (<i>naos</i>) built for 46 years. Passover.				2:13-25
		5	II John the Baptist imprisoned.	4:12	1:14	3:19,20	4:1-3
		6	III Jesus on the road to Galilee 4 months before harvest				4:35
		7	IV (month VII) "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."	4:17	1:15	4:14,15	4:44,45
		8	V				
	[17]	9	VI				
		10	VII				
		11	VIII				
		12	IX				
31		1	X				
		2	XI				
		3	XII Banquet with tax collectors.	9:9-17	2:13-22	5:27-39	5:1* 7
		4	I				
		5	II Disciples tear off some ears (wheat harvest).	12:1-8	2:23-28	6:1-5	
		6	III				
		7	IV				
		8	V				
	[18]	9	VI				
		10	VII Death of Sejanus. Imperial policy becomes pro-Jewish.				
		11	VIII Jesus calms a storm (between August and December).	8:18-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
		12	IX				
32		1	X				
		2	XI Herod Antipas beheaded John the Baptist.	14:1-12	6:14-29	9:7-9	
		3	XII 5000 men fed just before the Passover.	14:13-21	6:30-44	9:10-17	6:1-13
		4	I				
		5	II				
		6	III				
		7	IV Olympiad 202:4				
		8	V				
	[19]	9	VI				
		10	VII Teaching at the Feast of Tabernacles (10 Tishri).				7:11-52
		11	VIII The harvest is great and cultured for 3 years.			10:2 13:7	
		12	IX Feast of Dedication (25 Kislev).				10:1-39
33		1	X				
		2	XI				
		3	XII Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.	21:1-17	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:1,12-19
		4	I Passover meal on Friday 14 Nisan. Judas was dismissed	26:20,21	14:17,18	22:14-18	
		5	II and establishment of the Last Supper.	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:21-30
		6	III Pentecost, lunar eclipse mentioned (Acts 2:1, 20)				
		7	IV Paul becomes a Christian (Galatians 1:15-18, 2:1)				
		8	V				
	[20]	9	VI				
		10	VII				

Paul's conversion to Christianity, shortly after Jesus' death (1Corinthians 15:4-8), had to occur in 33 CE. He explains that he spent 3 years in Arabia before going up to Jerusalem after his encounter with the risen Jesus (Galatians 1:15-18) and 14 years later he

⁷ * The feast of the Jews mentioned in John 5:1 (taking place in spring according to its place in timeline) likely means the festival of Nikanor which occurred on 13 Adar (Jewish Antiquities XII:412; 2 Maccabees XV:36), as other better known festivals as the Passover (March / April) or the Feast of dedication (late December) are always mentioned by name in the text of John.

went again to Jerusalem with Barnabas (Galatians 2:1). As this second trip is dated in 50 CE⁸ with the expulsion of Jews from Rome mentioned at this meeting (Acts 15:1-2,18:1-2), Paul's conversion has occurred between July and October of the year 33 (= 50 - [3+14]).

The death of John the Baptist occurred in 32 CE because, according to Josephus, (shortly after) that murder by Herod Antipas a "divine vengeance" would have resulted: destruction of his army by Aretas IV, king of Petra, and death of his brother Herod Philip in the 20th year of Tiberius (33/34) after 37 years of reign (Jewish Antiquities XVIII:106-119). The text of John 2:13-20 also assumes that Jesus' ministry began in 29 CE as it quotes a discussion placed at the first Passover (at 30 CE): *The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem (...) the Jews replied, 'It has taken 46 years to build this sanctuary [naos]'*. The Greek word *naos* means the sanctuary of the Temple and not the Temple itself [*ieron*]. Moreover Josephus (Jewish Antiquities XX:219) states that the Temple [*ieron*] was not yet completed at the time of the procurator Albinus (62-64 CE). Concerning the sanctuary, he writes: *When Herod completed the 17th year of his reign, Caesar came in Syria (...) It was at this time, in the 18th year of his reign, after the events mentioned above, that Herod undertook an extraordinary work: the reconstructing of the temple of God at his own expense (...) the sanctuary [naos] itself was built by the priests in 1 year and 6 months* (Jewish Antiquities XV:354,380,421). Cassius Dio place the journey of Augustus in Syria in the spring of the year, February/ March, when Marcus Publius Silius and Apuleius were consuls in 20 BCE (Roman History LIV:7:4-6), actually corresponds to the end of the 18th year of Herod (21/20). Thus, the building of the Temple [*ieron*] began to 20 (in April) and the building of the sanctuary [*naos*] began to 19 BCE (in October) and was completed in March to 17 BCE because it lasted 1 year and 6 months. For religious reasons, construction of the sanctuary was probably made during the 20th and 21st year of Herod the Great, which were sabbatical and jubilee years. The period of 46 years ending so around April 30 CE (if the 46 years were counted from the construction of the Temple, not the sanctuary, they would be completed by October 29 CE).

Depuydt asserts that oldest sources set the death of Jesus in 29 CE citing Tertullian (155-222) who dates this death during consulates Rubellius Geminus and Rufius (sic) Geminus. In fact, the earliest source which dates the death of Jesus (in 33 CE) is the Greek historian Phlegon of Tralles who completed in 140 CE his chronology of the most important events dated by Olympiads. Matthew mentions, for example, both an earthquake and surprising darkness (Matthew 27:45-54), and not a solar eclipse during the death of Jesus from noon to 3 p.m., the hour of prayer, according to Acts 3:1 (these 3 hours are beyond the duration of a solar eclipse). Several authors report this exceptional darkening. Thallus, a Samaritan historian of the 1st century, says in the third book of his Histories, quoted by Julius Africanus⁹ (in 220 CE): *A most terrible darkness fell over all the world, the rocks were torn apart by an earthquake, and many places both in Judea and the rest of the world were thrown down*. Phlegon of Tralles gives a specific date, reported by Eusebius: *In the 4th year, however, of Olympiad 202, an eclipse of the sun happened, greater and more excellent than any that had happened before it; at the 6th hour, day turned into dark night, so that the stars were seen in the sky, and an earthquake in Bithynia toppled many buildings of the city of Nicaea*¹⁰. The 4th year of the 202nd Olympiad is from July 32 to June 33 CE, which confirms the date of 3 April 33 CE. This information was considered reliable at the time because Origen (in 248 CE) quoted it to

⁸ According to Suetonius: *Since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus* (The Live of Claudius XXV:4). Paulus Orosius reads: *In the 9th year of his reign, Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome* (A History, against the Pagans VII:6) and Cassius Dio: *[in 50 CE] As for the Jews, who had again increased so greatly that by reason of their multitude it would have been hard without raising a tumult to bar them from the city, he did not drive them out, but ordered them, while continuing their traditional mode of life, not to hold meetings* (Roman History LX:6,8).

⁹ JULIUS AFRICANUS - Chronographiae

Turnhout 1966 Ed. Brepols (Migne) Patrologiae Graecae t. X p. 91.

¹⁰ EUSEBE - Chronicorum

Paris 1857 Patrologiae Graecae t. XIX Ed. Migne p. 535.

refute Celsus (Against Celsus II:14,33,59), a Greek philosopher very critical of Christianity but familiar with history. Eusebius¹¹ also states in his quotation from Phlegon that Jesus began his ministry in the 15th year of Tiberius and he died 3 years later in the year 18. He gives a more accurate duration of *not quite 4 years* in another of his books (Ecclesiastical History I:10:2). Jerome, who published the chronicle of Eusebius, regarded it as reliable. According to Irenaeus, some heretics propagated (in 177 CE) a period of only 1 year for the ministry of Jesus (Against Heresies II:22:5).

Two elements provided by the Gospels can confirm this dating (3 April 33 CE) by astronomy. The day of the Passover could coincide with any day of the week, but the next day, corresponding to the first day of the feast of unleavened bread was to be a Sabbath (Leviticus 23:5-7). If this Sabbath (15 Nisan) coincided with the usual Sabbath on Saturday, it was called a "great Sabbath". As Jesus was resurrected on the first day of the week of the Jewish system (John 19:31; 20:1), on Sunday, he is dead on Friday 14 Nisan. It is possible to calculate what was the day of the week corresponding to 14 Nisan. Thus the only year for which 14 Nisan falls on a Friday¹² during the period from 27 to 35 CE is the year 33. Depuydt proposes Friday 15 April 29 CE assuming an error of one day on the observation of the 1st crescent, but this is unlikely because one would have to admit that the 1st crescent was seen one day too early, but a new moon is not visible. The day corresponding to 14 Nisan on the 26-36 CE period is as follows:

year	14 Nisan in Julian calendar	Lunar eclipse	Event	
26	Friday 22 March	-		
27	Wednesday 9 April	-		
28	Monday 29 March	-		
29	Saturday 16 April	-	Jesus is baptized	John 1:28-32
30	Wednesday 5 April	-	1 st Passover	John 2:13
31	Monday 26 March	-	2 nd Passover	[John 5:1]
32	Monday 14 April	(no visible in Jerusalem)	3 rd Passover	John 6:4
33	Friday 3 April	OK	4 th Passover	John 12:1
34	Monday 22 March	-		
35	Monday 11 April	-		
36	Friday 30 March	-		

A second confirmation of 33 CE comes from the book of Acts describing celestial phenomena that occurred at the death of Jesus: *The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood* (Acts 2:20), text already describing a lunar eclipse just before the destruction of the first Temple¹³ (Joel 3:3-5). Generally, during a lunar eclipse it appears blood-red, which is the most natural explanation of the text of Acts. The Roman historian Quintus Curtius suggests, for example, a lunar eclipse, in terms that illuminate how this phenomenon was perceived at the time (c. 50 CE): *Alexander made in this place, a halt of two days, and the next, gave the order to start. But near the eve of the day, the moon was eclipsing, the brightness of its disk began to disappear, and then a kind of veil of blood came sullyng its light: worried already about the approaches of a so terrible accident, the Macedonians were imbued with a deep religious feeling, and fear at the same time. This was against the wishes of the gods, they said, that drew them to the ends of the earth, the rivers were already unaffordable and the stars did not pay more than their former clarity and everywhere they met wastelands, deserts everywhere: and why so much blood? to satisfy the vanity of one man! He disdained his*

¹¹ R. HELM – Eusebius Werke
Berlin 1956 Ed. Akademie-Verlag Berlin pp. 174,175.

¹² <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/pgj/julien.htm>

¹³ There was a lunar eclipse in 587 BCE on 4 July (13 Tammuz), which coincided with the legal end of bloody sacrifices in the Temple (Daniel 9:27). The Talmud relates that the sacrifices in the Temple ceased on 17 Tammuz because of a total lack of sheep (Mishnah 4:6 Taanit 28b) and the Bible dates the beginning of the fall of Jerusalem from 9 Tammuz (2 Kings 25:1-4).

homeland, he disowned his father Philip, and in the pride of his thoughts, aspired to heaven! Sedition would burst, when Alexander, still inaccessible to fear, command chiefs and principal officers of his army to assemble in his tent body and at the same time the Egyptian priests, whom he considered very skilful in knowledge of the sky and stars, to express their opinion. Those knew well that, in the course of time, a series marked by revolutions is accomplished, and that the moon is eclipsed when it passes under the earth, or it is hidden by the sun, but what calculation revealed, they careful avoid sharing with vulgar. At hearing them, the sun is the heavenly body of the Greeks, the moon for the Persians: also, whenever it vanishes, it is to the Persians a portent of ruin and desolation, and they cite to examples of ancient kings of this empire, in which the moon by eclipsing, testified that they were fighting with opponent gods. Nothing so powerfully governs the minds of the multitude that superstition carried, cruel, fickle as any other occasion, when vain ideas of religion dominate, it obeys the priests much better than its leaders. Also, the response of the Egyptians, just published in the army, revived the drooping spirits of hope and confidence (Histories of Alexander the Great IV:10). Curtius gives an accurate description of the eclipse dated 13/VI year 5 of Darius III (20 September 331 BCE) by a Babylonian astronomical tablet (BM 36761), but the alleged Egyptian source of his explanations is actually a truncated quotation from Herodotus (Histories VII:37) because it states that the Persians also sacrificed to the sun and the moon (Histories I:131). Quintus Curtius himself recognized the point: *It was a traditional use among the Persians, not turn on after sunrise, when the day was shining in all its brilliance. The starting signal given by the trumpet, left the tent of the king over the tent, loud enough for everyone could see it, shone like the sun embedded in the crystal (...) then came a chariot dedicated to Jupiter, drawn by white horses, and followed by a courier of an extraordinary size, which is called the messenger of the sun: golden wands and white garments distinguished the conductors of these horses* (Histories of Alexander the Great III: 3). When Curtius explains that a lunar eclipse with a veil of blood cannot be a harbinger of death he expresses the ideas of his time in cultivated circles but also indicates that these eclipses were seen as prescient in popular circles. In the 1st century Josephus shared this view: *do not you disturb yourselves at the quaking of inanimate creatures, nor do you imagine that this earthquake is a sign of another calamity; for such affections of the elements are according to the course of nature, nor does it import any thing further to men, than what mischief it does immediately of itself* (Jewish War I:377). The evangelist Luke, who was a doctor, had to share this scientific view about lunar eclipses (sometimes abnormal darkness is caused by thick clouds made of dust or ash). There was actually a partial eclipse of the moon on Friday 3 April 33, which began towards 3:40 p.m. and was visible in Jerusalem from 5:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. It is also, according to astronomical calculations¹⁴, the only one falling on Friday¹⁵ between 26 and 36 CE, period of Pilate's legation in Judea:

Tiberius reign	year	14 Nisan: Julian calendar	Lunar eclipse	Event
15/16	29	Saturday 16 April	-	Baptism of Jesus (Luke 3:1-23)
16/17	30	Wednesday 5 April	-	
17/18	31	Monday 26 March	-	
18/19	32	Monday 14 April	(no visible in Jerusalem)	death of John the Baptist
19/20	33	Friday 3 April	OK	death of Jesus
20/21	34	Monday 22 March	-	death of Herod Philip
21/22	35	Monday 11 April	-	

Dates from the lunar calendars are easy to check because new moon precedes 1 day (or 2) the 1st day of each month coinciding with the 1st visible crescent. Hebrew lunar calendar sets the Passover to 14 Nisan, traditional date of Jesus' death. This date can be

¹⁴ <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/LEcat5/LE0001-0100.html>

The maximum eclipse is at 14:47 UT and its beginning is set 86 minutes earlier, dated in Jerusalem at 15:41 (= 14:47 – 86 + 2:20).

¹⁵ J.P. PARISOT, F. SUAGHER - Calendriers et chronologie
Paris 1996 Éd. Masson pp. 164-166.

back-calculated by astronomy in the period beginning with the ministry of Jesus in the year 15 of Tiberius (29 CE) until the end of the legation of Pontius Pilate (36 CE). Similarly, the lunar eclipse requires to date 33 CE the death of Jesus. These two coincidences on the date of Friday 14 Nisan impose on Friday 3 April 33 CE.

Mainly thanks to Mark's account it is possible to reconstruct precisely the last days of Jesus' life (in 33 CE):

Calendar	Hourly	Major events of the trial.	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Wednesday 12 Nisan	15 - 18	<i>Annas and Caiaphas looking for a way to condemn Jesus to death, but not during the Passover.</i>	26:1-5	14:1-2	22:1-2	
Thursday 13 Nisan	18 - 24	<i>Judas offers Annas and Caiaphas deliver Jesus to them.</i>	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6	
	24 - 6	<i>Thursday 2 April 33 CE begins after 24:00.</i>				
	6 - 12					
	12 - 15	<i>Preparing of the Passover.</i>	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13	
	15 - 18	<i>The celebration of Passover begins (after 18 hours).</i>	26:20-21	14:17-21	22:14	
Friday 14 Nisan	18 - 22	<i>Passover meal, then Judas dismissed, institution of the Last Supper. Peter's denial planned, move to the Mount of Olives</i>	26:21-33 26:34-46	14:22-25 14:26-41	22:15-30 22:30-46	13:1-18:1
	22 - 24	<i>Jesus is arrested by the police of Temple, then is brought to Annas, the former high priest, for an investigation into his teaching, then to Caiaphas' home, the high priest in title.</i>	26:47-56 26:57-65	14:42-52 14:53-60	22:47-53 22:54	18:2-11 18:12-23 18:24
	24 - 2	<i>Friday 3 April. The Sanhedrin looks for false testimonies, but there are discrepancies. Caiaphas offers the Sanhedrin the charge of blasphemy, which not prevail.</i>	26:65-68	14:61-65		
	2 - 6	<i>Peter denies Jesus three times. Second cockcrow.</i>	26:69-75	14:66-72	22:55-65	18:15-27
	6 - 9	<i>The Sanhedrin takes council to put Jesus to death, then delivers him to Pilate (Judas hangs himself then smashes by falling). Inquiry of Pilate who then sends Jesus to Herod Antipas. After some mockings Herod sends Jesus to Pilate.</i>	27:1-10	15:1-5	22:66-71 23:1-11	18:28-32
	9 - 12	<i>Trial of Pilate: inquiry about the kingship of Jesus. Pilate offers an acquittal which is denied. To save Jesus, Pilate offers the release of Barabbas, a murderer, but the latter is accepted. To release Jesus he makes him flogged, but the Jews accuse him of being an accomplice and thus be against Caesar. Pilate washes his hands and agrees to condemn Jesus on the grounds of lese majesty ("King of the Jews").</i>	27:11-23 27:24-31	15:6-19	23:13-23 23:24-43	18:33-40 19:1-22
	12 - 15 Night 1	<i>Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus until the place of execution. Some drugged wine is offered to Jesus, for anesthetizing, who refuses. Abnormal darkness. To refresh him someone offers some sour wine to Jesus who accepts. Death of Jesus at 15h.</i>	27:32-45	15:20-41	23:44-49	19:23-30
	15 - 18 Day 1	<i>Peace Offering of the official Passover at 15h. Josephus of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin and secret follower of Jesus asks Pilate, who accepts, the body of Jesus to put it in his grave. Lunar eclipse of blood (Acts 2:20).</i>	27:46-56 27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-56	19:31-41
Saturday 15 Nisan	18 - 24 Night 2	<i>Great Sabbath (Sabbath coinciding with the first day of Unleavened Bread).</i>				(19:31)
	24 - 6	<i>Saturday 4 April.</i>				
	6 - 12 Day 2	<i>At the request of Annas and Caiaphas, Pilate makes keep the grave by soldiers until the 3rd day (Sunday).</i>	27:62-66			
	12 - 18					
Sunday 16 Nisan	18 - 24 Night 3					
	24 - 6	<i>Sunday 5 April.</i>				
	6 - 9 Day 3	<i>Resurrection at the beginning of the 1st day of the week, an angel appears to women. Annas and Caiaphas are informed but they pay the guards in order to say that the body was stolen while they sleep.</i>	28:1-15	16:1-2	24:1-14	20:1-18

This reconstruction is based on the assumption of a 1st lunar day coinciding with the 1st visible crescent. Depuydt rightly noted that this observation was delicate and could be flawed by an error of 1 day. However, in this case, there was a delay (due to observation failure) and not an advance of 1 day. Thus, contrary to what we read too often, there is no contradiction or an anachronism among the four Gospel accounts. The only difficulty is an exceptional situation of great Sabbath (John 19:31). In fact, the day before the Sabbath was called the "Preparation" as stated in the text of Mark 15:42, and on the eve of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15 to 21), coinciding with Passover, was also called the "Preparation ". Context helps to understand what we were talking about preparation: *Now it was preparation of the Passover (...) Then the Jews, since it was Preparation, in order that the bodies might not remain upon the torture stakes on the Sabbath, for the day of that Sabbath was a great one (...) There, then, on account of the preparation of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the memorial tomb was nearby* (John 19:14,31,42). In these passages, Preparation coincides with Passover and thus refers to the preparation of the Sabbath to come and not the preparation of the Passover itself which had taken place the previous day (13 Nisan).

Another text has often been misunderstood, it is John 18:28: *It was now early in the day. But they themselves did not enter into the governor's palace, that they might not get defiled but might eat the Passover*, which suggests that Jesus and his disciples had celebrated this festival with a day in advance. In fact, the Talmud (Pesahim 6:3) states that the Passover included the paschal lamb, consumed at the beginning of 14 Nisan (after sunset) and a "sacrifice of peace" consumed during the day of 14 Nisan, at 15:00 after the prayer (Acts 3:1). It is this sacrifice (not required by the Mosaic law) that aims the text. As the Passover was celebrated in the home and that the sacrifice of peace was brought to the Temple, it is the latter which came primarily to designate the festival itself. This point also explains the apparent anachronism observed in the trial of Jesus reported by the Talmud: *On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, 'He is going forth to be stoned because he has practised sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favour, let him come forward and plead on his behalf.' But since nothing was brought forward in his favour he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!* — *'Ulla retorted: Do you suppose that he was one for whom a defence could be made? Was he not an enticer, concerning whom Scripture says, Neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him (Dt 13:6-9)? With Yeshu however it was different, for he was connected with the government. Our Rabbis taught: Yeshu had five disciples, Matthai, Nakai, Nezer, Buni and Todah* (Sanhedrin 43a). This condemnation of Jesus refers to the trial before the Sanhedrin for blasphemy, involving stoning, and not the trial before Pilate for lese majesty involving crucifixion. This condemnation (stoning!) was actually considered the day of the peace offering which was marking the Temple Passover.

Most alleged anachronisms in the course of the Passover in the Gospel accounts come from interpretations based on readings from late do not reflect the situation of the first century, some controversies are even artificial. For example, the determination of the day for the sacrifice of the paschal lamb is presented as problematic as it was to take place "between the two evenings", but there is no controversy about this in the Talmud. Again the lack of controversy before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE proves the interpretation of the "litigious" passage was evident at this time. Indeed, we read: *You may pick from the young rams or from the goats. And it must continue under safeguard by you until the 14th day of this month, and the whole congregation of the assembly of Israel must slaughter it between the two evenings. And they must take some of the blood and splash it upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway belonging to the houses in which they will eat it. And they must eat the flesh on this night. They should eat it roasted with fire and with unfermented cakes along with bitter greens* (Exodus 12:5-8).

Since the Jews were to eat roast lamb night of Nisan 14, its immolation and preparation had necessarily occurred before that night, so between the previous evening or sunset (13th Nisan) and the evening of 14 Nisan. The precision "between the two evenings" was useful for two reasons: the preservation of meat and blood was restricted to a maximum period of 24 hours for hygiene reasons and the preparation should not encroach on the feast itself. The only discussions that are found in the Talmud are the following: if Passover fell on a Sabbath what can be prepared, at what time the preparation of the Passover has to start and at what time sacrifices may be offered to the Temple? It reads¹⁶: *If Nisan 14 occurred on the Sabbath we must remove everything that needs to be done before the Sabbath, according to Rabbi Meir; the sages say: in its time. Rabbi Eleazar ben Zadok: sacred sampling before the Sabbath, profane foods in their time (...) The sages say: in Judea one worked on the eve of Passover until noon, but in Galilee they did absolutely nothing; about at night, Shammaites prohibited work, Hillelites permitted until sunrise (...) The evening daily sacrifice was slain at eight and a half [14:30] and offered to nine and a half [15:30]. On the eve of Passover they advanced all one hour that it was an ordinary day or a Sabbath. If the eve of Passover falls on a Sabbath day, they kill at six and a half [12:30] and one offers at seven and a half [13:30] and then (they slaughter) the Passover. Rabbi Ishmael ensures that follows the same week and the Sabbath, Rabbi Akiba is that the order followed the Sabbath is the same as the day before Passover falling one day before the Sabbath; the reason of the latter, one must leave room for the daily sacrifice (...) We offer a victim festival at the same time as lamb when it is sacrificed on a weekday (...) on the eve of Passover, close to the sacrifice of the afternoon [15:00], we do not eat anything until the night [from 18:00] (...) We must eat it the night before midnight [24:00].* These comments relate only to the time, not on the day, show that the legislation of that time was not fixed. Jewish writers of the first century, as Philo of Alexandria (Questions and Answers on Exodus I:11) and Josephus confirms that the offering of the sacrifice of peace was used to designate the day of Passover: *When came the feast called Passover, during which Jews offer sacrifices from the 9th to the 11th hour [15:00 to 17:00]* (Jewish War VI:423). The preparation of the Passover, on Thursday afternoon, was seen as part of the festival since we read in the Book of Jubilees¹⁷ (160-150 BCE): *Let the Israelites come and observe the Passover on the correct day, on the 14th day of the 1st month, between the evenings, from the 3rd part of the day [14:00-18:00, Nisan 13] to the 3rd part of the night [2:00-6:00, Nisan 14], as two parts of the day are given to the light, and a 3rd part to the evening (...) They are to eat at evening [18:00], until the 3rd part of the night [2:00-6:00]* (Book of Jubilees 49:10-11). This conception of the "preparation" explains the apparent anomaly of the text of Mark: *Now the Passover and the [festival of] unleavened bread was two days later (...) Now on the first day of unleavened bread, when they customarily sacrificed the Passover [victim], his disciples said to him: Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?* (Mark 14:1,12). The Gospel writer therefore considered that the Passover marked the beginning of unleavened bread festival, as confirmed by Josephus at this time, because this festival started in practice with the preparation of that day: *The feast of unleavened bread we call "Passover" (...) When came the day of unleavened bread, the 14th of the month Xanthicus [Nisan]* (Jewish Antiquities XVIII:29; Jewish War V:99).

Some texts, such as Mark 15:25, are blown out of proportion to affirm "chronological inconsistencies"¹⁸. According to this text: *it was now the 3rd hour when they impaled him* when it is stated a little further in verses 33 and 34: *When it became the 6th hour a darkness fell over the whole land until the 9th hour. And at the 9th hour Jesus called out with a loud voice. Jesus was nailed at the 6th hour [12:00], not the 3rd hour, and then died at the 9th hour*

¹⁶ J. BONSIRVEN - Textes rabbiniques des deux premiers siècles
Roma 1985 Ed. Pontificio Istituto Biblico pp. 200-218.

¹⁷ J.C. VANDERKAM - The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text
Louvain 1989 Ed. E. Peeters.

¹⁸ R.E. BROWN - La mort du Messie. Encyclopédie de la passion du Christ.
Paris 1994 Éd. Bayard pp. 938, 939.

[15:00]. Mark's text therefore refers to the 3rd hour of the trial before Pilate (who started around 9 am, after his return to Herod) and not the 3rd hour of the day [9:00] to emphasize the duration of harsh treatment inflicted on Jesus in verse 15 (Jesus was tortured (through Roman flogging)¹⁹. Furthermore, in verse 21, we learn that Simon of Cyrene came from the field (late morning) when it was requisitioned to help Jesus carry his gallows to his place of torment. Darkness which begin at noon coincide with the killing of Jesus can be found in the text of Amos 8:9: *it must occur in that day, is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, that I will make the sun go down at high noon, and I will cause darkness for the land on a bright day*. This precision allows us to understand the amazing reckoning of Matthew 12:40 giving the length of the funeral stay of Jesus: *For just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish 3 days and 3 nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth 3 days and 3 nights*. As Jesus died on Friday at 15:00 and rose on Sunday around 6:00 he only stayed 39 hours in death, not 72 hours (= 3x24h), but there is actually a total of 3 days and 3 nights²⁰.

Brown²¹ spent a long excursus to the dating of Jesus' death, he explains why the final date of Friday 3 April 33 CE that should have been imposed was however rejected: *If we exclude 27, not only astronomically low, but premature for the death of Jesus in the light of almost all the information on the evangelical life and ministry listed above, this leaves two possibilities for the Nisan 14 be a Friday, that is to say, on 7 April 30 and 3 April 33 (Julian calendar). It is a general tendency to reject 33 because this would imply a Jesus too old and too long a ministry as it would have been almost 40 years old at his death, after a ministry of about 4 years. If he died in 30, he would have been 36 years old and have had a ministry of a little less than 2 years. No date meets all indices of evangelical details about the birth and ministry of Jesus, but as many of these details are approximate and theological referred, I see no problem with these two dates. Somehow the political situation in 33 (after the fall of Sejanus in Rome on October 31) better explain the vulnerability of Pilate to pressure from the people, but this is an argument too uncertain to justify a preference*. The date 33 CE is mainly rejected because of the expected date of birth at 7 BCE, which is false! Error causes error. The second reason for some to reject the historical data of the biblical text is, in the words of Brown, that: *many of these details are approximate and theological referred*, in particular concerning the scandalous trial of Jesus. In fact, evidence for dating the time of Jesus' birth (Monday 29 September 2 BCE see: *Dating the Death of Herod*) and those describing the trial are very precise, contrary to the disillusioned assertion of Brown. Similarly, his remark about Sejanus is removed too quickly. In fact, the veiled threat from the Jewish authorities to appeal to Caesar against Pilate (John 19:12) well supported that date, because this threat guess they were likely to be heard. Yet, according to Philo of Alexandria, after the death of Sejanus in October 31 CE, Tiberius asked provincial governors to be considerate to the Jews, because the charges against them in the past [before 32 CE] were false (Legation to Gaius 159-161). This remark implies situating the trial of Jesus after 32 CE.

Some commentators propose to situate Jesus' death in 30 CE because, according to a text of the Talmud, the Temple of Jerusalem was disapproved (by God) from this date: *Our Rabbis taught: During the last 40 years before the destruction of the Temple [in 70 CE] the lot [For the Lord] did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-coloured strap become white; nor did the westernmost light shine; and the doors of the Sanctuary would open by themselves, until R. Johanan b. Zakkai rebuked them, saying: Sanctuary, Sanctuary, why wilt thou be the alarmer thyself? I know about thee that thou wilt be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Ido has already prophesied concerning thee: Open thy*

¹⁹ The usual instrument was a short whip (*flagrum* or *flagellum*) with several leather straps of unequal length, plaited or not, which were set at intervals of small metal balls or splinters of bone sheep especially sharp.

²⁰ Night 1: Friday 14 Nisan from 12h to 15h (miraculous night); Day 1: Friday 14 Nisan from 15h to 18h; Night 2: Saturday 15 Nisan from 18h to 6h; Day 2: Saturday 15 Nisan from 6h to 18h; Night 3: Sunday 16 Nisan from 18h to 6h; Day 3: 16 Nisan from 6h to 18h.

²¹ R.E. BROWN – *La mort du Messie*. Encyclopédie de la passion du Christ. Paris 1994 Éd. Bayard pp. 1485-1516.

doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars (Yoma 39b). This text does not mention the death of the Messiah, though the Gospels confirm the rejection of the temple from this date: *Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats. So, after making a whip of ropes, he drove all those with the sheep and cattle out of the temple, and he poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. And he said to those selling the doves: Take these things away from here! Stop making the house of my Father a house of merchandise! His disciples called to mind that it is written: The zeal for your house will eat me up. Therefore, in answer, the Jews said to him: What sign have you to show us, since you are doing these things? In answer Jesus said to them: Break down this sanctuary [naos], and in 3 days I will raise it up. Therefore the Jews said: This sanctuary [naos] was built in 46 years, and will you raise it up in 3 days? But he was talking about the sanctuary [naos] of his body (John 2:13-21).* There is clearly a misunderstanding about the identification of the "sanctuary" or "Most Holy". According to the Christian interpretation, the sanctuary (Most Holy for the Jews) became incarnate in Jesus from his baptism in 29 CE and therefore the destruction of this "sanctuary" lasted 3 days (from 14 to 16 Nisan 33). The temple [ieron] of Jerusalem, including the former sanctuary [naos] deprecated, would be permanently destroyed in 70.

Luke's text gives more details about the baptism of Jesus because it was an important event from a chronological point of view: *In the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (...) Now as the people were in expectation and all were reasoning in their hearts about John: May he perhaps be the Christ? (...) Jesus himself, when he commenced [his work], was about 30 years old (Luke 3:1,15,23).* According to this text, Jesus appears as the Messiah at his baptism (the word Messiah means "anointed" in Hebrew and was translated into Greek by Christ) in the 15th year of Tiberius (19 August 28 to 18 August 29 CE) when he was about 30 years old. As he was born on 29 September 2 BCE, he was exactly 30 on 29 September 29 CE, which involves attaching his baptism at the end of the 15th year of Tiberius. Luke's text makes it possible to date Jesus' baptism around August 29 CE. He also indicates that at his time the people were waiting for the Messiah²². The historian Josephus also explains: *Now it is fitting to relate certain things about this man (Daniel) which one may greatly wonder at hearing, namely that all things happened to him in a marvellously fortunate way as to one of the greatest prophets and during his lifetime he received honour and esteem from kings and people, and, since his death, his memory lives on eternally. For the books which he wrote and left behind are still read by us even now, and we are convinced by them that Daniel spoke with God, for he was not only wont to prophesy future things, as did the other prophets, but he also fixed the time at which these would come to pass. And, whereas the other prophets foretold disasters and were for that reason in disfavour with kings and people, Daniel was a prophet of good tidings to them, so that through the auspiciousness of his predictions he attracted the goodwill of all, while from their realization he gained credit among the multitude for his truthfulness and at the same time won their esteem for his divine power. And he left behind writings in which he has made plain to us the accuracy and faithfulness to truth of his prophecies (...) And there would arise from their number a certain king who would make war on the Jewish nation and their laws, deprive them of the form of government based on these laws, spoil the temple and prevent the sacrifices from being offered for 3 years. And these misfortunes our nation did in fact come to experience under Antiochus Epiphanes, just as Daniel many years before saw and wrote that they would happen. In the same manner Daniel also wrote about the empire of the Romans and that Jerusalem would be taken by them and the temple laid waste. All these things, as God revealed them to him, he left behind in his writings, so that those who read them and observe how they have come to pass must wonder at Daniel's having been so honoured by God, and learn from these facts how mistaken are the Epicureans, who exclude Providence from human life and refuse to believe that God governs its affairs (Jewish Antiquities X:266-276).*

²² A. PAUL - Le concept de prophétie biblique Flavius Josèphe et Daniel
in: Recherches de Sciences Religieuses Tome 63 Paris 1975 pp. 367-384.

Death of the Messiah: a prophetic date

According to a Jewish comment on the Messiah of Daniel 9:26, found at Qumran (dated beginning of our era), the Messiah suppressed after the 62 weeks is the messenger announcing the good news, described in Isaiah 61:2. According to other comments¹, David's Messiah had to fulfil the prophecy of Genesis 49:10, announcing that he would be a king from the tribe of Judah, that the Targums of Onkelos and Jerusalem confirm that Shilo "It is to him" would be a king identical to the liberating messiah. Influenced by nationalism, some Jews (from 167 BCE) assimilated the Messiah to the high priest Onias III (1 Maccabees 1:54), to the extent that the translators of the Septuagint modified the book of Daniel² to make it stick to these events. Jesus did not adhere to this identification (Matthew 24:15) because, unlike some Hellenized Jews of his time who saw this event in the past, he announced it for the future: *When you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, let the reader use discernment.*

In the first century Messianic expectations were high mainly because of the text of Daniel³. Today, Jews (mostly) no longer expect a messiah, some of them are hoping for the coming of a collective Messiah (the State of Israel) and not a single messiah. In the preface of the Bible written by the French rabbinate Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan of France, we read: *But of all the prophecies contained in the Book, it is one that is often mentioned. It refers to the resurrection of the State of Israel. When, in November 1947, the United Nations decided to create a Jewish state, event, for many believers, appeared in a supra-terrestrial perspective. Many predictions announced—and for millennia—this back from Israel on the ancestral land that they could not help perceiving the historic vote in a striking demonstration of divine action in the world. In addition, after the proclamation of independence of Israel (14 May 1948), which was a Sabbath, the liturgical cycle, by a coincidence which deserves to be remembered, as stated the Haphtara text of Amos where could read: Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when ... I restore the fortunes of my people Israel, and they will restore their destroyed cities and established there, shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, cultivate gardens and eat their fruit.* What about such a political recovery of Old Testament Messianic prophecies? This Jewish interpretation, which is quite late, is due to the great figure of Judaism Rabbi Shlomo Yitshaqi called Rashi of Troyes (1040-1105) who changed his understanding of chapter 53 of Isaiah to the end of his life. Indeed, he thought, like all Jews before him, that the text had to apply to an individual messiah, but struck by the terrible massacres among the Jewish community in Rhineland as a result of the First Crusade in 1096 CE, he thought he saw in these terrible suffering the fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 53 that he applied to Israel considered a collective messiah. This original explanation contradicts the teachings of all the rabbis (without exception) who always taught the coming of an individual Messiah and refuses Biblical chronology about the coming of the Messiah. Moses Maimonides (1138-1204) also recalls in his 13 principles founding the Jewish faith that him who does not believe in the Messiah as a future king from the house of David has denied God⁴.

According to the text of Micah 5:1-2, the Messiah would come out of the city called Bethlehem Ephrathah, implying an individual messiah. This understanding is confirmed by

¹ M. WISE, M. ABEGG JR., E. COOK - Les manuscrits de la mer morte
Paris 2001 Éd. Plon p. 171, 340, 600.

² H. COUSIN - La Bible grecque
in: supplément aux Cahiers Évangile 74 St. Étienne 1990 Éd. Cerf pp.105-111
S. PACE JEANSONNE - The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 7-12
Washington 1988 Ed The Catholic Biblical Association of America pp. 29,125

³ P. GRELOT - L'espérance juive à l'heure de Jésus
in: collection «Jésus et Jésus-Christ» n°62, 1994 Éd. Desclée.

⁴ M. MAÏMONIDE - épîtres (traduit de l'hébreu par Jean de Hulster)
Paris 1983 Éd. Gallimard (Verdier) pp. 193-195.

the text of Matthew 2:2-6 and the Targum of Mika which says: *unto thee [Bethlehem] Messiah will come out before me*. Moreover, in the two major Jewish prayers Messiah is invoked. In the fourteenth blessing of the Tephilla it is said: *Be merciful, Y., our God (...) to your people Israel (...) and the reign of the house of David, Messiah of righteousness*. The Kaddish says: *May he introduce his Messiah and may he redeem his people*⁵. This understanding of an individual messiah has led many Jews to calculate the time of his coming, especially at the beginning of our era. For example, the famous Rabbi Akiba had believed to see in Bar Kohkba (killed in 135 CE) the awaited Messiah (Talmud Ta'anit 68d).

The identification of the Messiah depends primarily on the biblical chronology indicating at what time it would appear. Thus, it is in this way that the Jews and the Christians decided in 1263 to settle this old controversy that opposed them during the famous Barcelona dispute through the debate organized by the King of Spain between Paul Christiani, a converted Jew to Catholicism and Rabbi Moses ben Nahman (Nahmanides), one of the highest authorities of Spanish Judaism. As we know⁶, there has been no agreement on the interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel, because to Christiani the Messiah had to appear in 70 during the destruction of the Temple (!) while Nahmanides provided his coming for 1358 (!). These two famous protagonists are clearly wrong. For Christians, Jesus is the Messiah, who died in 33 while in 1358 no messiah has appeared, not more than 70 (Josephus predicted to Titus, son of Vespasian, a messianic destiny as future king of the world). Given their importance, the arguments of this controversy deserve to be reviewed. The Talmud (Megillah 3a) states that when the Targum of the Prophets (containing Daniel) was composed by Yonatan ben Uzziel, a *bat qol* (heavenly voice) was heard saying: *Who is the one who revealed my secrets to men?* The author replied that he had not done it for his honour, but God's honour, in order that divisions do not multiply in Israel. He wanted to publish the Targum of hagiographers, but the *bat qol* said: *Enough is revealed because here is the term (date of arrival) of the Messiah*.

In 1263 the protagonists in the debate accepted the prophecy of weeks of years of Daniel chapter 9 as referring to the time of the appearance of the Messiah, but this is no longer the case today (which further complicates things). By viewing comments of current translators, one notices that for many biblical scholars:

- The book of Daniel was written by an anonymous author shortly after 167 BCE.
- The Messiah from Daniel 9:26 would designate the high priest Onias III murdered into 172 BCE by Antiochus IV Epiphanes⁷.

DANIEL, DID HE WRITE THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Since the advent of source criticism then literary criticism which is closely related, many experts believe (although there are a multitude of "chapels") as the books of the Bible follow a sort of literary Darwinism, that is to say that "various sources more or less old" were gradually amalgamated by an author (or authors) more or less skilfully. What are the arguments that allow a conclusion as categorical? The text of Daniel 7:1 says that Daniel wrote his book! Similarly, the text of Exodus 17:14 (and 34:27) says that Moses is the author of the work that is assigned to him. These statements are they authentic? The main arguments of the critics are threefold: 1) If a document has a word which appeared at a given time, the entire document had to appear, at the earliest, from this time. The book

⁵ J. BONSIRVEN - Textes rabbiniques des deux premiers siècles
Roma 1985 Ed. Pontificio Istituto Biblico pp.2,3.

⁶ NAHMANIDE - La dispute de Barcelone
in: collection «Les Dix Paroles» 1984 Éd. Verdier pp.45-47.

⁷ M. SARTRE - D'Alexandrie à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique
Paris 2001 Éd. Fayard p. 344

of Daniel contains Greek words appeared in the 2nd century BCE, It would therefore be of this time. 2) A recent document is always a copy, more or less well made, from a old document (or more). The book of Daniel evoking Babylon, it would have drawn its sources in Babylonian stories. 3) Miracles are, from a rational point of view and in principle, impossible. "The abomination that causes desolation" mentioned in Daniel 11:31 is identified in the book of Maccabees (c. 100 BCE) with the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV in 167 BCE (1Maccabees 1:54). Biblical scholars conclude that this prophecy must have been written after the described event (prophecy being postulated impossible) and therefore assume a date of writing of the book of Daniel in the period 167-164.

These three objections may be refuted. The first is based on ignorance. The Hebrew word *pardes* "park", for example, which appears three times in the Bible (Song of Solomon 4:13; Ecclesiastes 2:5, Nehemiah 2:8), would derive from the Greek word *paradeisos* and as this word appears for the first time, among known texts, in the narrative of Xenophon (Anabasis 6,29,4-8), written around -400, some conclude that the books of the Bible may have not been written prior to this time. Subsequent studies have shown that the Greek word *paradeisos* comes from Old Persian (c. -600). Thus a dating based only on the very limited knowledge we have over the history of ancient languages is often speculative⁸. For example, according to a reference dictionary⁹, the words *ketem* "gold" (Job 28:16,19), *pardes* "park" and *karoz* "herald" (Daniel 3:4) are late since *pardes* and *karoz* have been borrowed from Greek. However, according to a later dictionary¹⁰, these rare words already existed in Akkadian: *kutīmu* from the Sumerian KU-DIM "goldsmith" (c. -2000), *pardēsu* "enclosure" from the Old Persian *pari-dīdā* "low wall around" and *kirenzī* "proclamation" would be borrowed from Hurrian language (c. -1500). In a further study¹¹, the Old Persian *pari-dīdā* would come from the Median *pari-daiṣa*, a language spoken in Ecbatana which began around -1000¹². Former assertions of anachronisms are now anachronistic and were actually based on an illusion, missing words were in fact hibernating words¹³. In the present state of our knowledge there are only three words —zither, lute and bagpipe— appearing only in Daniel 3:5, which would have a Greek origin and would have arisen after -400. Even this assumption is questionable because the Hebrew word *šāmpōnyā* "bagpipe", Greek *sumphōnia*, already appears as *sumphōnos* in Pythian Ode 1:70, dated -460, at the time of Ezra.

Rewriting by Ezra the scribe of all the biblical books (originally in paleo-Hebrew) into Aramaic (Talmud Sanhedrin 21b), complicates text criticism. Ezra (485-400?) was a contemporary of Nehemiah, he wrote his book around -405. Indeed, Darius the Persian mentioned in Nehemiah 12:22 is identified with Darius II (called Ochus or Nothos), who reigned from -423 to -405. Thus, if Nehemiah was able to recount this, he wrote it after the beginning of Darius II's reign (after -423). In addition, in a letter found among Elephantine papyri (dated -408)¹⁴, it is mentioned that Johanan was high priest in Jerusalem at that time. But again, if Nehemiah recounts this fact he had to write it after -408. If Nehemiah was

⁸ P. GUILLEMETTE M. BRISEBOIS - Introduction aux méthodes historico-critique

in: Héritage et projet 35 Québec 1987 Éd.Fides pp. 287-300

⁹ F. BROWN, S.R. DRIVER, C.A. BRIGGS – A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament Oxford 1951 Ed. Oxford University pp. 508, 825, 1097.

¹⁰ J. BLACK, A. GEORGE, N. POSTGATE – A Concise Dictionary of Akkadian Wiesbaden 2000 Ed.Harrassowitz Verlag pp. 159, 171, 266.

¹¹ P. LECOQ – Les inscriptions de la Perse achéménide Paris 1997 Éd. Gallimard p. 116.

¹² F. JOANNÈS – Dictionnaire de la civilisation mésopotamienne Paris 2001 Éd. Robert Laffont p. 517.

¹³ A.R. MILLARD - The Tell Fekheriyeh Inscriptions in: Biblical Archaeology Today 1990. Jerusalem 1993, Ed. Israel Exploration Society p. 523

A.R. MILLARD - A Lexical Illusion in: *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31 (1986) pp. 1-3.

¹⁴ A. COWLEY -Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C. Oxford 1923 N°30-31, pp.108-122

able to describe the succession of high priests until the end of the reign of Darius II, he had to finish his book around -405. In addition, it is likely, according to Jewish tradition, that Ezra began his work as a copyist at the age of 30, acquiring over the years a great reputation. It also seems logical to assume that he wrote his own book to the end of his life, or at the same time as Nehemiah. Ezra probably copied the entire Bible over a period ranging from -455 (20th year of Artaxerxes) to -405 (last year of Darius II), which may explain the anachronistic presence of certain words. Ezra had to update some technical terms. The word *daric* (1Chronicles 29:7), for example, is anachronistic since this monetary unit appeared only after -520 was unknown at the time of David, four centuries earlier. Ezra obviously made a conversion of an old unit into one other more common and familiar at his time (Ezra 8:27). The historian Xenophon (428-355) commits the same "anachronism" in his book on Cyrus (Cyropaedia V:2)!

Thus, concluding that the book of Daniel was written in the 2nd century BCE, only because of three words considered late, generates unexplainable paradoxes. It is generally accepted that the book of Ezekiel was written in the early 6th century BCE. However, this book quotes the prophet Daniel, proving that he already had a great reputation at that time (Ezekiel 14:14,20, 28:3). How then can we explain this anachronism? In addition, Aramaic used in Daniel¹⁵ is very similar to that used by Ezekiel or Ezra (Empire Aramaic mostly used from -600 to -330), well before Aramaic of Qumran scrolls written in this language and dated to the 2nd century BCE. In fact, one could reverse the argument: how to explain the Book of Daniel contains only three words of Greek origin if it had been written in the 2nd century BCE, when Greek language largely submerged the world of that time? More surprisingly, as noted by the Hebrew scholar Carl Keil, the Septuagint omitted to mention women in Daniel 5:3 and 5:23, according to the custom of the Macedonians, Greeks and Romans. But the original in Hebrew says there were concubines (as archaeology shown). This unusual detail indirectly proves that the Greek translation of the book of Daniel is late and was carried out during the 2nd century BCE. The fact that the Hebrew version speaks, on the contrary, of concubines assumes a date of writing well prior to Greek period.

Some little-known historical details confirm the antiquity of the book of Daniel. The writer of this book was presented primarily as an eyewitness, he cites no Babylonian story and was not sticking to any polytheistic mythology. The only source that is specifically cited is the book of Jeremiah (Daniel 9:2). To assume that Daniel has written his story from Babylonian sources is pure speculation. An evidence that he was actually a contemporary of the items he mentioned is the discovery made in 1854, in the ruins of Ur, of an inscription confirming the existence of a character named Belshazzar. No historian had ever heard of such an individual, neither Herodotus (484-425) or Thucydides (460-398), nor Xenophon (428-355), nor Ctesias (450-390), or Berosus (330-250?), so much so that historians of the early 19th century claimed that king Belshazzar appearing into Daniel 5:1 should be a myth because, according to "known sources", it was universally accepted that Nabonidus was the last king at the fall of Babylon in -539. The tablets of 1854 also showed that Nabonidus (Nabunaid) had entrusted the kingdom to his eldest son Belshazzar (Belšarušur) "Bel, protect the king", explaining his absence in Babylon during its fall. Last detail still showing accuracy of the biblical narrative: Belshazzar being a co-regent (since his father Nabonidus remained the titular king, not mentioned in the story of Daniel), he could offer to Daniel as highest position in his kingdom only the third place, according to what relates specifically Daniel 5:16, and not the second because the first two were already occupied (by him and his father). Finally, historians have "rediscovered" that readers of Daniel knew long ago.

¹⁵ A.K. KITCHEN "The Aramaic of Daniel"

in: *Notes on Some Problems in the Book of Daniel* London 1965 Ed.The Tyndale Press pp. 31-79.

Similarly, a Babylonian chronicle reveals that Cyrus during his first year of reign, appointed Ugbaru as king of Babylon, as indicated in the text of Daniel where he is called Darius the Mede (Daniel 5:31) or Harpagus by Herodotus (The Histories I:108,127-130,162,177-178).

In fact, the presence of specific chronological prophecies in the book of Daniel is unacceptable, in principle, for rationalist atheists. However, to deny prophecies a priori is to deny the distinctive element of the Bible in relation to other religious books: *At the same time, we must recognise that the interpretation of scriptural prophecy is never a matter for the individual. For no prophecy ever came from human initiative. When people spoke for God it was the Holy Spirit that moved them* (2 Peter 1:20-21). This biblical feature helps to explain some surprising events. For example, when Alexander the Great led a campaign to remove all friends of Persia he strangely spared Judea was yet one of their allies and, paradoxically, has maintained good relations with the Jews. The historian Josephus gives the reason: when Alexander tried to invade Jerusalem, the city opened its gates and showed him the prophetic book of Daniel announcing a powerful Greek king who will conquer and dominate the Persian Empire, according to the text Daniel 8:20-21, which favourably impressed Alexander (Jewish Antiquities XI:337). Some sceptics argue that all this had to be written after the fact to turn this happy event (which becomes inexplicable) into prophecy. To resolve without appeal this chronic objection of prophecies, it is advantageous to examine the one of the seventy weeks of years. Qumran discoveries have established beyond any doubt that the book of Daniel existed before 100 BCE (Hebrew manuscript 4Q114 is dated 115 BCE and Greek manuscript¹⁶ 4QDan^c between 100 and 50 BCE). However, if the chronology of the Messiah announced in Daniel 9:25 is exactly the appearance of Jesus as the Messiah, the affirmation of a writing afterwards (rational explanation) becomes unsustainable.

HISTORY OF THE MESSIAH

The messiah of Daniel 9:25 is special because it is called "guide" and is associated with the "removal of sin" (verse 24). The Messiah must appear before the destruction of the Second Temple (which took place in 70 CE) as the prophecy indicates that the period before the Messiah would begin with the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple, and that once the Messiah came the sanctuary would be destroyed (verse 26). Aware of the difficulty in identifying the high priest Onias III to an Prince, the Bible French rabbinate guide assumes that the Messiah (or prince) here means another messiah and proposes that Cyrus was actually a qualified King Messiah (or anointed) into Isaiah 45:1. Nahmanides believed that Messiah prince rather meant as Zerubbabel was the first governor of Judah, and he quoted the passage from Psalms 105:15 where God says: *Do not touch my messiahs [or anointed ones]* to indicate that Zerubbabel could be considered a messiah because this term refers to those who are anointed and appointed for a mission.

Jewish commentators¹⁷, unable to clearly identify the prince of Daniel 9:25, offer (optional): Cyrus, Zerubbabel or Jeshua son of Jozadaq, although none of these characters corresponds to the chronology of the book of Daniel. To support their choice these commentators prefer to read (despite the grammar): *until the anointing of the prince* the sentence: *until Messiah the prince*. Regarding chronological inconsistencies produced, they say that Daniel made a mistake! The different identifications proposed are unlikely because they do not explain how sin is removed from the death of a prince, whose life is in general poorly known, and how justice is restored, and the chronological identification is

¹⁶ S. PACE JEANSONNE - The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 7-12
in : *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series* 19 Washington 1988 p. 7.

¹⁷ H. GOLDWURM, N. SCHERMAN - Daniel, traduction et commentaires
Paris 2001 Éd. du Sceptre pp. 240-242, 260-263.

impossible while according to Daniel 9:2 and 9:22, this prophecy was given for performing accurate chronological and not vague speculation. The Bible of the French rabbinate translates paradoxically the text of Daniel 9:25 by: *Know therefore and well understand that from the moment the order was given to start rebuilding Jerusalem until an anointed prince (Cyrus) there is seven weeks, and for sixty-two weeks [Jerusalem] shall be rebuilt again.* A note states that the weeks mean weeks of years, on which all translators agree¹⁸. The translation of the French rabbinate defies common sense for two reasons, in fact it implies that:

- Jerusalem would be rebuilt over a period of 434 years (=62x7 years = 62 weeks), contradicting the text of Ezra 6:14-15 fixing the end of the rebuilding of the Temple in the 6th year of Darius I, in -515, followed by the end of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I (Nehemiah 2:1; 6:15), in -455 (see Dating the reign of Xerxes and Artaxerxes).
- The most important event would no longer be the Messiah to come (as Daniel knew Cyrus the "messiah") but the announcement of the rebuilding of Jerusalem. Once again this interpretation is contradicted by chronology since Cyrus freed the Jews from Babylon, in -538. The order of reconstruction in -455 would have been given 7 weeks later, in -489 (= -538 + 7x7). There is a gap of 34 years (= 489 - 455) unbridgeable.

With the replacing Cyrus by Zerubbabel, who began to govern in -537 (Ezra 3:1-8), the gain is only 2 years, there are still about 32 years to fill. Worse, the book of Daniel states that the Messiah is cut off after 62 weeks, or 434 years (= 62x7). However, if this Messiah was the high priest Onias III (murdered in -172), the order to rebuild Jerusalem (beginning of 62 weeks, according to the Bible the French rabbinate) would have been given to -606 (= -434 -172), new impossibility, since there would be this time about 161 years (= 606 - 445) to fill. Chronology eliminates all these candidates, but what about Jesus?

DOES JESUS MATCH TO THE MESSIAH OF DANIEL 9:25 CHRONOLOGICALLY?

Jews do not accept obviously identifying Jesus to the Messiah for at least three reasons: 1) having been persecuted for nearly two thousand years by people who called themselves Christians, they took a long time the name of Jesus in horror; 2) the recognizing of Jesus would imply a total questioning of the foundations of Judaism; 3) if Jesus was the Messiah promised, why are there still wars, diseases and misfortunes, when the Messiah would bring a reign of peace and happiness? These three objections, absolutely legitimate, are refutable: 1) Jesus himself announced that God would reject anyone who murders in his name, Jew (John 8:40,44) or Christian (Matthew 7:21-23; 1John 3:10,11). Faithful Christians cannot fight and hurt their neighbours (2 Corinthians 10:3,4; John 13:35, Matthew 5:44,45). 2) If one rejects the biblical text of Daniel, it is not possible to determine at what time would reveal the Messiah. Furthermore, on what criteria a biblical text should be rejected? 3) The third objection is based on an anachronistic amalgam of various messianic prophecies. The Jews noticed that the chapter 53 of Isaiah describes a "suffering messiah" while the following chapters (60 and 61) of the same book describes a "glorious messiah."

How to reconcile these seemingly contradictory descriptions? To solve this puzzle, some Jews suppose, as we have seen, a "suffering messiah" representing Jewish people, and expect a "glorious Messiah" (unidentified). They came to think of two messiahs¹⁹. Jews of Qumran had already arrived at this conclusion, but for completely different reasons. Having found that the "glorious Messiah" was also a "royal Messiah," they concluded

¹⁸ This choice is based on the following texts: *You shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, that is to say, the time of seven weeks of years, 49 years* (Leviticus 25:8) *You have recognized the country 40 days. Every day is a year: 40 years you carry the weight of your sins* (Numbers 14:34) *I'll have time to set a day for a year* (Ezekiel 4:6).

¹⁹ C. CHALIER, M. FAESSLER - Deux messies : fils de Juda, fils de Joseph in: Judaïsme et christianisme l'écoute en partage, Paris 2001 Éd. Cerf pp. 307-345.

logically that it had to come from the tribe of Judah. This "royal messiah" being known to lead a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6), they concluded that it would be also a priest. However, there was an unsolvable problem since a Jew could not simultaneously belong to the tribe of Levi (associated with the priesthood) and the tribe of Judah (associated with royalty). The Essenes therefore assumed the simultaneous existence of two messiahs: one from Levi and another from Judah²⁰. In the Talmud (Sukka 52a), there are also discussions about a messiah who was the son of Joseph, killed before the appearance of another messiah son of David, coming from Judah. Judah and Joseph being representative of the two parts of Israel together, according to Ezekiel 37:16.

The solution to resort to two messiahs, rather than the one with two achievements is complicated, but more importantly, contrary to common sense because it requires (as recognized some Jewish commentators today) this implausible conclusion: *The Messiah will arrive when all will be righteous, he will arrive when all will be sinners. He will come with great pomp and glory, he will come in the utmost discretion and destitute. He will come at a fixed date and can come at any time (...) Conflicting and confusing texts are dealing in this long-awaited climax of history*²¹. The inconsistency is obvious. In fact, the solution proposed by the Gospels solves this apparent paradox. The right to the priesthood was hereditary (Numbers 3:6-9), such as the right to the throne, however, the right to the priesthood could also be of divine right (exceptional case), as was the case for Aaron and Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:6; Psalms 110:4). If the Bible announced that the Messiah would appear in the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10) no prophecy mentions that should appear in the tribe of Levi.

CHRONOLOGICAL CALCULATIONS OF DANIEL 9:24-27

Before performing chronological calculations, there must be a literal translation free of pro or anti-Messianic influences because, given the stakes, translators have often been tempted to influence their translation. Some have speculated, for example, that since the Messiah and the period are mentioned twice in verses 24 to 27, it would imply the existence of two messiahs or two distinct periods! If this were the case, we could find some perversity in Daniel since he would have written: *I have come forth to make you insight with understanding* (Daniel 9:22-23), whereas it finally would apply to anyone in a clear manner! This is not reasonable, especially since it is easy to see that the first period of 70 weeks is identical to the second count (7 + 62 + 1, a total of 70 weeks). Therefore this period regards the same messiah or anointed one.

Textual criticism now considers that the Masoretic text of Daniel is reliable and differences with the text of the Septuagint are generally in favour of the Hebrew text but with some exceptions²². Several Hebrew manuscripts of Daniel, dated around 100 BCE, are close to the Masoretic text but not identical to it²³. In addition, the Greek translation of the book of Daniel (LXX) is not literal and contains errors or corrections, but it is unclear whether it would not be the case of the Hebrew text as well²⁴. The only way to know is to do a chronological analysis of historical data inside the two texts²⁵:

²⁰ M. WISE, M. ABEGG JR., E. COOK - Les manuscrits de la mer Morte
Paris 2001, Éd. Plon pp.171,340.

²¹ H. GOLDWURM, N. SCHERMAN - Daniel, traduction et commentaires
Paris 2001 Éd. du Sceptre p. XLVIII.

²² D. BARTHÉLEMY - Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament Tome 3
Göttingen 1992 Éd. Universitaires Fribourg pp. 435-496.

²³ J.J. COLLINS, P.W. FLINT, C. VAN EPPS - The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, Volume 2
Leiden 2002 Ed. Brill pp. 573-607.

²⁴ S. PACE JEANSONNE - The Old Greek Translation of Daniel 7-12
in : *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series* 19 Washington 1988 pp. 103-133.

²⁵ R.T. MCLAY - Daniel. Old Greek / Theodotion
in : New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007) Ed. Oxford University Press pp. 991-1022.

Correct text of Daniel is highlighted in green and (wrong) corrections and additions in orange:

Old Greek LXX	Theodotion LXX	Reference
O King, you made a feast for <i>your friends</i> , and you were drinking wine, and the vessels of the house of the living God were brought to you, and you were drinking with them, you and your nobles	and you have exalted yourself against the Lord God of heaven, and the vessels of his house they brought before you, and you and your nobles and <i>your concubines and your consorts</i> were drinking wine with them	Daniel 5:23
<i>Then Baltasar the king clothed Daniel in purple, and he put a gold torque on him, and he gave him authority over a 3rd part of his kingdom.</i> And the meaning came upon Baltasar the king, and the rule was taken away from the Chadeans and was given to the Medes and to the Persians, and <i>Xerxes who was king of the Medes, received the kingdom.</i>	<i>And Baltasar spoke and they clothed Daniel in purple, and the gold torque they put around his neck, and he proclaimed concerning him that he was 3rd in the kingdom.</i> In that very night <i>Baltasar the Chaldean king, was killed and Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being 62 years old.</i>	Daniel 5:29-30
(...) and shattered their bones, and <i>Daniel was appointed over the whole kingdom of Darius.</i>	(...) and pulverized all their bones.	Daniel 6:24
And <i>King Darius was added to his fathers, and Cyrus the Persian received the kingdom.</i>	And <i>Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian</i>	Daniel 6:28
<i>During the 3rd year, when Baltasar was king, there was a vision, which I, Daniel, saw (...)</i> <i>The ram that you saw, which had the horns, is the king of the Medes and Persians.</i>	<i>In the 3rd year of the reign of King Baltasar a vision appeared to me —I, Daniel (...)</i> <i>The ram that you saw, which had the horns, is the king of the Medes and Persians.</i>	Daniel 7:1,20
70 weeks have been decided for your people and for the city, Sion: for sin to be consummated and to make iniquities scarce and to blot out iniquities and to comprehend the vision and for everlasting righteousness to be given and for the vision to be consummated and to gladden a holy of holies. <i>And you shall understand and will rejoice and will discover ordinances to respond, and you [Daniel] will build Ierousalem as a city for the Lord. And after 7 and 70 and 62 weeks, an anointing will be removed and will not be. And a king of nations will demolish the city and the sanctuary along with the anointed one [Messiah], and his consummation will come with wrath even until the time of consummation. He will be attacked through war. And the covenant will prevail for many, and it will return again and be rebuilt broad and long and at the consummation of times and in half of the week the sacrifice and the libation will cease, and in the temple there will be an abomination of desolations until the consummation of a season, and a consummation will be given for the desolation.</i>	70 weeks have been cut short for your people and for the holy city: for sin to be consummated and to seal sins and to atone for iniquities and to bring everlasting righteousness and to seal vision and prophet and to anoint a holy of holies. <i>And you shall know and shall understand: from the going forth of the word to respond to and to rebuild Ierousalem until an anointed [Messiah] leader, there will be 7 weeks and 62 weeks, and it [Ierousalem] will return, and streets and a wall will be built, and the seasons will be emptied out. And after the 62 weeks, an anointing will be destroyed, and there is no judgment in it. And it will destroy the city and the sanctuary along with the leader who is to come. And they will be cut off by a flood, and there will be annihilations to the finish of a shortened war. And it will strengthen a covenant with many, 1 week, and by half of the week sacrifice and libation will cease, and in the temple there will be an abomination of desolations even until a consummation, and a consummation will be given for the desolation.</i>	Daniel 9:24-27
at a set time. And he will enter into Egypt, and as the first so the last will be. <i>And the Romans will come and will espel him and rebuke him [the king of Egypt].</i> And he will back [and will be angered] against the covenant of the holy one	At the appointed time he will return and will come into the south, and as the first even so the last will not be. <i>And the Kitians who go forth will come against him [the king of the north],</i> and he will be humbled, and he will return and will be enraged against the holy covenant	Daniel 11:29-30
From the time that the [perpetual] sacrifice was taken away and the abomination of desolation was prepared to be given, there are 1290 days.	From the time of the removal of the regular offering and the abomination of desolation will be given —1290 days.	Daniel 12:11

The two Greek translations (LXX) are similar, but the original Hebrew text used (H*) had to be very close to the Masoretic text (MT). The first translator has corrected the Hebrew text to match the desecration of the Temple of Jerusalem by Antiochus IV²⁶ that lasted about 3 years (from 15 Kislev in 167 BCE to 25 Kislev in 164 BCE). The name Kittim was formerly understood by the Jews as representing the Greeks, from Alexander to Antiochus IV (1 Maccabees 1:1, 8:5), then from Antiochus IV (not before), according to the Peshar Nahum (4Q169)²⁷, the Kittim were representing the Romans. As one can see the text of Daniel 9:24-27 is translated differently, several indicators show that the Hebrew text of reference was indeed the Masoretic text. A Qumran manuscript in Hebrew (11Q13), dated around 100 BCE, explains the text of Daniel 9:26²⁸: *He will proclaim to them the Jubilee, thereby releasing them from the debt of all their sins. He shall proclaim this decree in the 1st week of the jubilee period that follows 9 jubilee periods. Then the "Day of Atonement" shall follow after the 10th jubilee period, when he shall atone for all the Sons of Light, and the people who are predestined to Melchizedek (...) "The messengers" is the Anointed [Messiah] of the spirit, of whom Daniel spoke; "After the 62 weeks, an Anointed [Messiah] shall be cut off" (Daniel 9:26). The "messenger who brings good news, who announces Salvation" is the one of whom it is written; "to proclaim the year of YHWH's favour, the day of the vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:2).* The quoted text is strictly that of the Masoretic text, while that of the Septuagint is (incomprehensible): *And after 7 and 70 and 62 weeks, an anointing will be removed.* The word Messiah has disappeared and the durations have been changed (those of the Masoretic text are logical since the total duration of 70 weeks is equal to the sum of the intermediary durations: 7 + 62 + 1 = 70).

The book of Daniel is little commented in the Qumran manuscripts with two exceptions: 1) when it is commented the Book of Jubilees serves as a reference and 2) the "son of man, chosen by God himself, who has to become the king of the coming world" (Daniel 7:9-14) is widely quoted and commented on the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch XLVI:1-4, XLVIII:2-7; LXII:6-16). These texts show that most of the first-century Jews were expecting a messianic king (rather than a messiah for salvation). For example, according to Tacitus: *The majority [of the Jews] were convinced that the ancient scriptures of their priests alluded to the present as the very time when the Orient would triumph and from Judaea would go forth men destined to rule the world. This mysterious prophecy really referred to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, true to the selfish ambitions of mankind, thought that this exalted destiny was reserved for them, and not even their calamities opened their eyes to the truth* (Histories 5:13). According to Suetonius: *There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief, that it was fated at that time for men coming from Judaea to rule the world. This prediction, referring to the emperor of Rome, as afterwards appeared from the event, the people of Judaea took to themselves* (The Life of Vespasian IV:5). According to Dio Cassius: *This prophecy about the tooth became a reality on the following day; and Nero himself in his dreams once thought that he had brought the car of Jupiter to Vespasian's house. These portents needed interpretation; but not so the saying of a Jew named Josephus: he, having earlier been captured by Vespasian and imprisoned, laughed and said: You may imprison me now [in 68 BCE], but a year from now, when you have become emperor, you will release me* (Roman History LXV:1). According to Josephus: *But now, what did the most elevate them in undertaking this war, was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular, and*

²⁶ M. HADAS-LEBEL – La révolte des Maccabées
Clermont-Ferrand 2012 Éd. LEMME edit pp. 41-46.

²⁷ [The interpretation of it concerns Jerusalem, which has become] a dwelling for the wicked ones of the nations. "Where the lion went to enter, the lion's cub [and no one to disturb". The interpretation of it concern Deme]trius, King of Greece, who sought to enter Jerusalem on the advice of the Seeker-After-Smooth-Things, [but God did not give Jerusalem] into the power of the kings of Greece from Antiochus until the rise of the rulers of the Kittim; but afterwards [the city] will be trampled [by the Gentiles ...]

²⁸ M. WISE, M. ABEGG JR, E. COOK – Les manuscrits de la mer Morte
Pari 2001 Éd. Plon pp. 257-260, 598-600.

many of the wise men were thereby deceived in their determination. Now this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea. However, it is not possible for men to avoid fate, although they see it beforehand. But these men interpreted some of these signals according to their own pleasure, and some of them they utterly despised, until their madness was demonstrated, both by the taking of their city and their own destruction (Jewish War VI:312-315). The text of Daniel 7 was well known at that time, but if Josephus was able to apply the prophecy of the "Son of man" to Vespasian it is because he read and interpreted the Hebrew text (MT): *And it will destroy the city and the sanctuary along with the leader who is to come [Roman ruler?]*, rather than the Greek text of the Septuagint: *And a king of nations will demolish the city and the sanctuary along with the anointed one [Messiah]*.

What proves that the text of Daniel has been written in -535 rather than -165? In fact, several very precise information inside could only be known prior to -535, which have been known only from the 19th century through archaeological discoveries:

- Babylonian kings were in the habit of drinking wine with their concubines and their consorts at royal banquets. Former historians did not know this strange custom.
- The inscriptions of Nabonidus²⁹ show that in his 3rd year of reign (in -553) he entrusted the kingdom to his eldest son, Belshazzar (Baltasar), and retired to Tema. According to these indications, the actual king of Babylon in -539 was therefore Belshazzar, (in his 14th year of reign), not Nabonidus. Prior to 1854, Belshazzar had been an enigma for historians and archaeologists who knew nothing of him outside the book of Daniel.
- According to Daniel 8:1-6,20 a ram with two horns appeared in the 3rd year of Belshazzar, in -550, representing the kings of Media and Persia. Indeed in -550 Cyrus II became king of Persia and Harpagus, his coregent, was king of Media³⁰.
- According to the Nabonidus Chronicle, Ugbaru (Gobryas) was the governor of Gutium, the Darius the Mede of Daniel, who actually led Cyrus the Great's army that captured Babylon on 17/VII/17 of Nabonidus (October 539 BCE), then Cyrus entered Babylon on 3/VIII/17. Ugbaru, his co-ruler, installed governors in Babylon (as he died on October 26, 538 BCE he can not be the Gubaru appearing 3 years later in November 535 BCE). According to the timeline of Nabonidus Chronicle the [actual] king of Babylon was Ugbaru (even if he was not formally enthroned) during the period from 3/VIII/00 to 11/VIII/01 of Cyrus. As Cyrus received the title of "King of Babylon" only after month X of the 1st year of his reign³¹ (prior this date, he was only "King of Lands"), year 1 of Cambyses coincides with year 2 of Cyrus. Cyrus chose Cambyses as King of Babylon from [-]/X/01, who was enthroned by the Babylonians only from 4/I/02 (Akitu feast) 2 months later. The co-regency between Cyrus (actual King of Babylon) and Cambyses (official king of Babylon) has begun informally from [-]/X/01 of Cyrus as confirmed by a double dated document (TuM 2-3, 92)³²: *month XI, day 25, year 1 of [Cyrus] year of accession of kingship! of Ganzysse! King of Babylon and of Lands*. It is interesting to notice that Ugbaru was likely 62 years old³³ in 539 BCE (Daniel 5:31).

²⁹ J. BRIEND M.J. SEUX Les textes du Proche-Orient ancien et l'histoire d'Israël Paris 1977 Éd. Cerf pp. 147-150.

³⁰ The chronology of Median kings comes from Herodotus (The Histories I:101-108) who mentions a total solar eclipse at the end of Cyaxares reign (dated May 28, 585 BCE according to astronomy). He wrote that Astyages, after a reign of 35 years, was defeated by Cyrus who thus became the ruler of Persia and Media, Harpagus becoming a coregent (The Histories I:127-130, 162, 177-178) called "Lieutenant of Cyrus" by Strabo (Geography VI:1) or "Commandant of Cyrus" by Diodorus Siculus (Historical Library IX:31:1). Harpagus is called Oibaras by Ctesias (Persica §13,36,45). According to Flavius Josephus, Cyrus took Babylon with the help of Darius the Mede, a "son of Astyages", at the epoch of Belshazzar, in the year 17 of Nabonidus (Jewish Antiquities X:247-249).

³¹ S. ZAWADZKI - Gubaru: A Governor or a Vassal King of Babylonia? in: *Eos* vol. LXXV (1987 Wrocław) pp.69-86.

³² O. KRÜCKMANN – Neubabylonische Rechts- und Verwaltungstexte in: *Texte und Materialien der Frau prof. Hilprecht collection of Babylonian antiquities* II-III, Leipzig 1933, N°92.

³³ One can suppose that Harpagus (Ugbaru) was at least 20 years old at the birth of Cyrus (The Histories I:108) who began to reign in 559 BCE, when he was probably 20 years old. Under this assumption, Harpagus was born in 599 BCE (= 559 + 20 + 20) and was around 60 years old at the time of the fall of Babylon in 539 BCE, that agrees with the biblical text.

Even if the authenticity of the book was sometimes disputed, the great Maimonides (Guide for the Perplexed 2:45) acknowledged it an inspiration of divine origin and placed Daniel on a par with David and Solomon. Literal translation of Daniel 9:23-27's text:

Hebrew	Literal translation	Comment
וּבִין	<i>and understand</i>	
בְּדָבָר	<i>in the word</i>	
וְהִבֵּן	<i>and make understand</i>	The phrase "make understand" is found in Daniel 8:16 where the angel Gabriel <i>make understand</i> to Daniel who had in turn to <i>make understand</i> to the people.
בַּמֵּרְאָה:	<i>in the matter seen</i>	
שָׁבָעִים	<i>weeks [of years]</i>	The word "week" is usually feminine in Hebrew whereas is masculine in Daniel's text. To keep this variant, translators use either the term "weeks [of years]" or the word "sevens".
שִׁבְעִים	<i>seventy</i>	
נִחְתָּךְ	<i>was determined</i>	
עַל-עַמֶּךָ	<i>upon people of you</i>	
וְעַל-עִיר	<i>and upon city</i>	
קִדְשָׁךְ	<i>sanctuary of you</i>	The word "sanctuary" could also be translated as "holy" but as in verse 26 it clearly refers to the holy [place] the word "sanctuary" is required.
לִכְלֹא	<i>to make cease</i>	
הַפֶּשַׁע	<i>the transgression</i>	
וּלְחַתֵּם	<i>and to finish</i>	
חַטָּאוֹת	<i>the sin</i>	
וּלְכַפֵּר	<i>and to absolve</i>	
עוֹן	<i>fault</i>	
וּלְהִבִּיא	<i>and to make come</i>	
צֶדֶק	<i>justice</i>	
עֲלָמִים	<i>of durations</i>	
וּלְחַתֵּם	<i>and to seal</i>	The meaning of "seal" is both "accomplish" and "put an end".
חִזְיוֹן	<i>vision</i>	The word "vision" has the meaning of prophecy.
וְנָבִיא	<i>and prophet</i>	
וּלְמַשֵּׁחַ	<i>and to anoint</i>	
קִדְשׁ	<i>sanctuary</i>	The word <i>qodesh</i> means "holy" / "sacred". The holy of holies generally refers to the Most Holy
קִדְשִׁים:	<i>of sanctuaries</i>	
וְתִדְעַ	<i>And you will know</i>	
וְתִשְׁכַּר	<i>and you will be insightful</i>	
מִן-מִצָּא	<i>since output</i>	
דָּבָר	<i>of word</i>	
לְהָשִׁיב	<i>to make return</i>	
וּלְבִנּוֹת	<i>and to build</i>	
יְרוּשָׁלַם	<i>Jerusalem</i>	
עַד-מָשִׁיחַ	<i>until messiah</i>	The word "messiah" could be translated as "anointed one" but the whole revelation of Gabriel relates this particular messiah, qualified as guide or remarkable. It is therefore the Messiah and not a messiah of some sort.
נִזְדָּר	<i>remarkable</i>	The word "remarkable" has a literal meaning "to be in front" in Hebrew, it means "chief" in Jeremiah 20:1 or "important" in Proverbs 8:6 when it describes another word (which is the case here). This qualification therefore draws attention to a remarkable anointed one: the Messiah. Used alone it means "leader" or "guide". Theodotion, for example, translated it

		into Greek as "until an anointed leader / Christ prince".
שָׁבָעִים	<i>weeks [of years]</i>	
שִׁבְעָה	<i>seven</i>	
וּשְׁבָעִים	<i>and weeks [of years]</i>	The word "and" has also the meaning of "then".
שִׁשִּׁים וּשְׁנַיִם	<i>sixty and two</i>	
תָּשׁוּב	<i>she will return</i>	"she" is the city of Jerusalem.
וּבִנְתָּהּ	<i>and been built</i>	
רָחֹב	<i>public square</i>	
וְחָרוֹץ	<i>and moat</i>	
וּבְצֹק	<i>in the straits</i>	
הַעֲתִים :	<i>of the times</i>	
וְאַחֲרֵי	<i>and after</i>	
הַשָּׁבָעִים	<i>the weeks [of years]</i>	
שִׁשִּׁים וּשְׁנַיִם	<i>sixty and two</i>	
יִכָּרֵת	<i>will be cut off</i>	
מָשִׁיחַ	<i>Messiah</i>	
וְאֵין	<i>and nothing</i>	
לּוֹ	<i>for himself</i>	
וְהָעִיר	<i>And the city</i>	
וְהַקֹּדֶשׁ	<i>and the sanctuary</i>	
יִשְׁחִית	<i>he will destroy</i>	"he" is the people remarkable.
עַם נִכְרָה	<i>people remarkable</i>	Remarkable*(see above) people are described in Daniel 2, first the Babylonians, then the Medo-Persians, the Greeks and other peoples to come with a link to the servants of God. The remarkable people after the Greeks was the Romans.
הָבָא	<i>coming</i>	
וְקֵצוֹ	<i>And end of him</i>	The word "him" seems to refer to the sanctuary.
בַּשֹּׁף	<i>in the flood</i>	The word "flood" is used in a metaphorical sense describing a military force, like in Daniel 11:26.
וְעַד קֵץ	<i>And until [the] end</i>	
מִלְחָמָה	<i>war</i>	
נִחְרָצָה	<i>It has been decreed</i>	
שְׁמֹטוֹת :	<i>some desolations</i>	
וְהִגְבִּיר	<i>He will make prevail</i>	The word "he" seems to refer to the Messiah.
בְּרִית	<i>covenant</i>	
לְרַבִּים	<i>for the multitude</i>	Multitudes or multitude. Some Jewish translators translate it as "grand ones", retaining its usual meaning elsewhere as in Daniel 11:44.
שָׁבוּעַ	<i>Week [of years]</i>	
אֶחָד	<i>one</i>	
וְחִצִּי	<i>and the half</i>	
הַשָּׁבוּעַ	<i>of the week [of years]</i>	
יִשְׁבֹּת	<i>he will make cease</i>	
זֶבַח	<i>sacrifice</i>	
וּמִנְחָה	<i>and offering</i>	
וְעַל כַּנָּף	<i>Upon [the] wing</i>	
שְׂקִיזִים	<i>of disgusting things</i>	"Disgusting things" refer to pagan idols (Jer 7:30-31), here the ensigns of the Roman armies represented by eagle wings.
מְשֹׁמֵם	<i>a desolator</i>	<i>This desolator will stand up after the king of Greece (Dan 8:20-25).</i>
וְעַד-קֵלָה	<i>And until extinction</i>	
נִחְרָצָה	<i>It has been decreed</i>	
תִּתָּךְ	<i>will pouring out</i>	
עַל-שָׁמָּה :	<i>upon [that is] desolate</i>	"[that is] desolate" could refer to the sanctuary (Daniel 9:17).

Taking into account the above remarks, the literal translation becomes: *Therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks [of years] 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 Holy of Holies. And you should know and have the insight [that] from the going forth of [the] word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah [the] Leader, there will be seven weeks [of years], and sixty-two weeks [of years]. She will return and be actually rebuilt, with a public square and moat, but in the straits of the times. And after the sixty-two weeks [of years] Messiah will be cut off, with nothing for himself. And the city and the holy place the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. And the end of it will be by the flood. And until [the] end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations. And he must keep [the] covenant in force for the many for one week [of years]; and at the half of the week [of years] he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation; and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate (Daniel 9:23-27).* It is possible that this highly controversial text has undergone some changes from the Jewish copyists, as evidenced by the pro-Maccabean translation of the Septuagint³⁴. However, the Jewish translation of Theodotion (c. 175 CE) written in an anti-Christian context is still very close to the Masoretic Text, it reads: *Therefore consider the matter, understand the vision. Seventy weeks have been determined upon thy people, and upon the holy city, for sin to be ended, and to seal up transgressions, and to blot out the iniquities, and to make atonement for iniquities, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal the vision and the prophet, and to anoint the Most Holy. And thou shalt know and understand, that from the going forth of the command for the answer and for the building of Jerusalem until Christ the prince [there shall be] seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks; and then [the time] shall return, and the street shall be built, and the wall, and the times shall be exhausted. And after the sixty-two weeks, the anointed one shall be destroyed, and there is no judgment in him: and he shall destroy the city and the sanctuary with the prince that is coming; they shall be cut off with a flood, and to the end of the war which is rapidly completed he shall appoint [the city] to desolations. And one week shall establish the covenant with many: and in the midst of the week my sacrifice and drink-offering shall be taken away: and on the temple [shall be] the abomination of desolations; and at the end of time an end shall be put to the desolation.* Paradoxically, the accurate Jewish translation of Theodotion (a revised LXX) is even more favourable to Christian interpretation than the Masoretic text which provides the basis for current translations (the current Jewish translations also derived from the Masoretic text). These remarks may remove some erroneous propositions and focus on what really the problem in the identification of the Messiah.

The text of Daniel 9:24-27 is clearly messianic and evokes an individual messiah whose chronological frame is perfectly defined. The whole period is 490 years = 70x (7 years) and is divided into 3 parts: 7+62+1 = 70. The starting point for calculating the appearance of this particular messiah is specified by the expression: *from the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader*. This messiah chief is killed with nothing for himself, then the holy city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary are destroyed. The text states that during the 70th and last week, after the appearance of the Messiah, sin is removed and justice is restored, resulting de facto in the abolition of the offering and sacrifice. The translation highlights the following chronologically points:

- After the starting point there is a period of 49 years (= 7x7) and 434 years (= 62x7) or 483 years in all. This period ends with the appearance of the Messiah. The text also states that the period of reconstruction (49 years) will be in the "distress of the times" and after a period of 434 years the Messiah shall be cut into destitution.

³⁴ Some modern commentators have tried to link the book of Daniel to the Poem of Danel unearthed at Ugarit (c. -1350), but excluding the name of the character, and even without the "i", there is clearly no point of contact between the two accounts.

- After the period of 490 years a new world power (Romans) will come to destroy the city and the sanctuary. The text states that the covenant will continue, but only up to half of the last week ($7/2 = 3.5$ years) and then offering and sacrifice are no longer needed.

According to the present chronology, Artaxerxes I would have begun to reign from -465 and 20 years later (in -445) Nehemiah is authorized to begin work (Nehemiah 2:1-8), the starting point of the prophecy. In fact, the current Achaemenid chronology is wrong because Artaxerxes I began to reign from -475 and not -465 (see Dating the Reign of Xerxes and Artaxerxes). This chronological error is the cause of countless debates about this famous prophecy³⁵. The starting point of the 490 years is set: *from the going forth of the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem*. This order to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given by Artaxerxes I in the month of Nisan in the 20th year of his reign (Nehemiah 2:1,5,8) in April 455 BCE. As Nehemiah said that the city wall was completed in 52 days on 25 Elul (22 September), he therefore made hearing this *word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem* on 3 Ab (2 August) to the Jewish deputy rulers who returned to the city (Nehemiah 2:16-18). Thus Ezra and Nehemiah gave a precise chronology: Cyrus issued a decree releasing the Jews in his 1st year of reign (Ezra 1:1-2), thus the Jews arrived in Jerusalem around October -538. The 2nd month of the 2nd year of their arrival (May -537) they began rebuilding the Temple, which was completed at the end of the 6th year of Darius I (in -515). In the 7th year of his reign, Artaxerxes I requested Ezra (in -468) to go to Jerusalem to beautify the Temple then, in his 20th year, he gave the order to Nehemiah to rebuild the city and not only the Temple. The city was finally inaugurated in -406 (= -455 + 7x7) towards the end of the reign of Darius II (Nehemiah 12:22). Chronology of events³⁶:

Julian date	Event and dating	Reference
May? -538	Order to rebuild the Temple by Cyrus the 1 st year of his reign.	Ezr 1:1-2
October -538	All the people gathered in Jerusalem on the 7 th month of the year.	Ezr 3:1
May -537	Beginning of the rebuilding of the Temple, the 2nd year of arrival.	Ezr 3:8-10
March-November -522	Samaritans' opposition who write to Artaxerxes [Bardiya].	Ezr 4:7-23
12 March -515	Temple completed (outside) at the end of the year 6 of Darius I.	Ezr 6:15
-485/-484	Attempted genocide against the Jews shortly after the death of Darius I, dated in year 12 of Xerxes (Esther 3:7).	Ezr 4:5-6
April -468	An order to beautify the Temple (inside) in the year 7 of Artaxerxes.	Ezr 7:8,20
April -455	An order to rebuild Jerusalem is read to Nehemiah in the year 20.	Neh 2:1-8
2 August -455	The order to rebuild Jerusalem is read to the Jewish leaders (3 Ab).	Neh 2:16-18
22 September -455	Walls of Jerusalem completed in 52 days on 25 Elul.	Neh 6:15
28 September -455	The Law of Moses is read to the people likely on 1 st Tishri.	Neh 8:1-2
[26 September] -406	City of Jerusalem completed (inauguration) at the end of Darius II.	Neh 12:22-43

According to this chronological reconstruction, the people, or the multitude of Jews at the time, heard *the order to rebuild Jerusalem* on the first Tishri 455 BCE, the starting point of the Messianic prophecy of the 70 weeks of years. By adding the 69 weeks of years, or 483 years, the last week of years of the alliance (the 70th) covers a period from the first Tishri 29 (= -455 + 483 + 1) to the first Tishri 36 (= -455 + 490 + 1), and half of that last week ($7/2 = 3.5$ years) therefore falls on April 33 (= 29 + 3.5). It is possible to determine exact matching dates thanks to astronomy, knowing that the first Tishri corresponds to the 1st visible crescent (new moon = + 1) after the autumnal equinox³⁷:

³⁵ L. BIGOT - Les 70 semaines de Daniel

Paris 1911 Éd. Letouzey & Ané in: Dictionnaire de théologie catholique tome VI.1 pp. 75-103.

³⁶ L. PIROT, A. CLAMER – La Sainte Bible Tome IV

Paris 1949 Éd. Letouzey et Ané pp. 305-310.

³⁷ <http://www.imcce.fr/fr/grandpublic/temps/saisons.php> http://www.imcce.fr/fr/grandpublic/phenomenes/phases_lune/index.php
<http://pagesperso-orange.fr/pgj/julien.htm>

Year	Jewish calendar	Astronomical event	Julian calendar	Day number
29		Spring equinox	Sunday 25 September	
		New moon	Monday 26 September	0000
	1 st Tishri	1 st crescent	Tuesday 27 September	0001
33	[14 Nisan]	[Full moon]	Friday 3 April	1284
36		Autumn equinox	Monday 24 September	2554
		New moon	Monday 8 October	2568
	1 st Tishri	1 st crescent	Tuesday 9 October	2569

Since the Messiah is cut off the middle of the last week which lasted 7 years ($= 7 \times 12 + 3$ lunar months $= 87 \times 29.530588$ days $= 2569$ days), the date indicating when he is cut off is the 1284th day ($= 2569/2$) because that day is half of this week. The date is therefore Friday 3 April 33 CE, which corresponds to the death of Jesus (14 Nisan 33). Did Jesus was baptized on 1st Tishri 29 CE? The answer is no for the three following reasons:

- If Jesus had been baptized on 1 Tishri, he could not attend the feast of Yom Kippur on 10 Tishri and the Feast of Tabernacles from 15 to 21 Tishri (Numbers 29:12) since he spent 40 days in the desert immediately after his baptism (Matthew 3:16-4:2). Because Jesus is presented as a devout Jew (who was observing Jewish law strictly) so it would be illogical to accept that he could violate an obligation such paramount of the Jewish law.
- The 1st Tishri 29, Jesus was exactly 30 years old. But as Luke chose to write "about 30 years", that implied that Jesus was not exactly this age (Luke 3:23). Luke is usually more accurate than the other evangelists³⁸.
- The Messiah would had to appear exactly when *the word to restore and rebuild Jerusalem* was pronounced, yet this word has not been issued on 1st Tishri but almost two months earlier when this order to rebuild Jerusalem is read by Nehemiah to the Jewish leaders on 3 Ab. The Messiah therefore has to appear on 3 Ab 29 CE (Monday 1^{er} August) which is the baptism date of Jesus. At that time Jesus' age is 29 years and 10 months and is in the 15th year of Tiberius rule (from 19 August 28 CE to 18 August 29 CE).

The messianic prophecy of Daniel gives a precise chronology that exactly matches the important events of Jesus' life. Furthermore this prophecy makes a strong link between the destruction of the Messiah, of the sanctuary (the Most Holy), of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem. Likewise the Gospels quote the prophecy of Daniel announcing the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:15-22) by the Roman armies (Luke 19:43-44, 21:20-24). Chronological parallel between the rebuilt Jerusalem by Nehemiah and the Jerusalem above of Messianic Christians (Galatians 4:24-26):

Julian date	Event and dating	Reference
1 August 29	The order to build <i>the Jerusalem above</i> is read to Messiah the Leader on 3 Ab . The sanctuary of sanctuaries is anointed (Lk 3:1,21-23; 4:1-2).	Dan 9:24-25
22 September 29	<i>The Jerusalem above</i> (Gal 4:24-26) completed in 52 days on 25 Elul .	
27 September 29	The order to build <i>the Jerusalem above</i> is read to the multitude of Jews, on 1st Tishri , entering into the covenant of the Kingdom (Heb. 8:6).	Dan 9:27
3 April 33	The Messiah is cut off with nothing for himself in half of the last week of 7 years, on 14 Nisan (Jesus death). Sacrifices cease (Heb. 10:2-14).	Dan 9:26-27
9 October 36	The covenant is kept for the multitude for 7 years (until 1st Tishri).	Dan 9:27
30 August 70	The wing of disgusting things (Roman armies) had to cause desolation burning the Temple, on 9 ab (War of the Jews VI:249-250).	Dan 9:27
28 September 70	Extermination upon Jerusalem, on 7 Elul (War of the Jews VI:435).	Dan 9:27

³⁸ He uses 14 times the term ὥστε "about" in his writings, but only 6 times for all the other writers of the New Testament: *about the 6th hour* (Luke 23:44), whereas it is only *the 6th hour* in Marc. This difference is not systematic, as Marc says: *about 4000 men* (Mark 15:33; 8:9), while Matthew mentions merely a simple: *4000 men* (Matthew 15:38). Luke writes: *about the 6th hour* in Acts when he implies the word "about" in another place (Acts 10:3, 3:1).

Duration of 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15) is not accidental because the sanctuary, the Most Holy of the temple, had to be rebuilt in 3 days according to John 2:19-22 and the Temple, represented by the church anointed by the Holy Spirit, according to Ephesians 2:20-22, had to appear at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) 52 days after the 14th of Nisan (Leviticus 23:15-16), the day when occurred the "demolition" of the sanctuary represented by the body of Jesus. Pentecost of 33 CE is dated 6 Siwan (Sunday 24 May 33 CE). The text of Daniel thus heralded the appearance of the Messiah on Monday 1st August 29 CE and his death on Friday 3 April 33 CE. The 70th week of years started on Tuesday 27 September 29 CE when Jesus was exactly 30. This coincidence is not accidental because the Gospel texts give Jesus a role of high priest (Hebrews 3:1, 7:26, 8:1) and this important character began to officiate as a priest only from 30 years old (Numbers 4:3, 1 Chronicles 23:3). The alliance with the multitude of Jews ended on 1st Tishri 36 CE (Tuesday 9 October) marked by the conversion of the centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:30). All these prophetic events occurred at exactly 3:00 p.m., the hour of prayer (Acts 3:1).

Daniel's prophecy which is very precise chronologically was supplemented by some additional time information: *I then said, My lord, what is to be the outcome? (...) those who are wise will understand. From the moment that the perpetual sacrifice is abolished and the appalling abomination set up: 1290 days. Blessed is he who perseveres and attains 1335 days* (Daniel 12:8-12). Both durations are extremely accurate. Although Daniel's prophecy announces the destruction of the Temple by the Roman armies, it mainly concerns the chronology of the Messiah³⁹ (Talmud Megillah 3a), because *the witness of the Messiah is the spirit of prophecy* (Talmud Shabbat 63a, Revelation 19:10). The first duration of 1290 days lasts between *the moment that the perpetual sacrifice is abolished and the moment the appalling abomination is set up*. The perpetual sacrifice had to be abolished when Jesus died (Hebrews 10:1-14), on Friday 3 April 33 CE. If *the wing of the appalling abomination* (Daniel 9:27) was the Romans armies in 70 CE *the appalling abomination* alone was in fact a powerful wicked spirit in heavens (Daniel 10:13) called Satan (Job 1:6). Immediately after the completion of the Jerusalem above, on 25 Elul 29 CE (Thursday 22 September), Satan was set up to destroy it (Luke 4:1-13). Thus between Thursday 22 September 29 CE and Friday 3 April 33 CE there are exactly 1290 days. Likewise, between the beginning of the covenant of the Kingdom, on 1st Tishri 29 CE (Tuesday 27 September), and its validation by God (Hebrews 9:23-28) at the Pentecost (Acts 2:1-18), on 6 Siwan 33 CE (Sunday 24 May). Thus between Tuesday 27 September 29 CE and Sunday 24 May 33 CE there are 1335 days.

Chronological details are frequent in the Bible and those concerning the conversion of Cornelius may be used to verify the date of the 1st Tishri 36 CE: *Now in Caesarea there was a certain man named Cornelius, an army officer of the Italian band, as it was called, a devout man and one fearing God together with all his household, and he made many gifts of mercy to the people and made supplication to God continually. Just about the 9th hour of the day he saw plainly in a vision an angel of God come in to him and say to him: Cornelius! (...) Cornelius said: 4 days ago counting from this hour I was praying in my house at the 9th hour, when, look! a man in bright raiment stood before me and said: Cornelius, your prayer has been favourably heard and your gifts of mercy have been remembered before God* (Acts 10:1-3,30). As the 1st Tishri 36 CE matches on Tuesday 9 October 36 CE, the day of the conversion of Cornelius, the 4th day earlier (not 3rd)⁴⁰ when this officer was praying had to be a Saturday (the Sabbath) at the hour of the prayer (Acts 3:1).

Chronology of main prophetic events over the period 29-33 CE:

³⁹ The vision in Daniel 8:11-14 concerns only the time of the End: *How long is this vision to be -- of perpetual [sacrifice], of horrifying iniquity, of sanctuary and army trampled underfoot? The first replied: Until 2300 evenings and mornings have gone by: then the sanctuary will have its rights restored, but this vision shows the time of the End* (Daniel 8:17) *the vision of the evenings and the mornings (...) for there are still many days to go* (Daniel 8:26).

⁴⁰ B.M. METZGER – A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament Stuttgart 1989, Ed. United Bible Societies pp. 375-377.

Jul-29	30	1	Ab	Saturday			
	31	2		Sunday			
Aug-29	1	3		Monday	1	Baptism of Jesus as Messiah [the] Leader (Lk 3:1,21-23; 4:1-2). The order to build [the] Jerusalem [above] is read to him (Neh 2:16-18).	
	2	4		Tuesday	2		
	3	5		Wednesday	3		
	4	6		Thursday	4		
	5	7		Friday	5		
	6	8		Saturday	6		
	7	9		Sunday	7		
	8	10		Monday	8		
	9	11		Tuesday	9		
	10	12		Wednesday	10		
	11	13		Thursday	11		
	12	14		Friday	12		
	13	15		Saturday	13		
	14	16		Sunday	14		
	15	17		Monday	15		
	16	18		Tuesday	16		
	17	19		Wednesday	17		
	18	20		Thursday	18		
	19	21		Friday	19		
	20	22		Saturday	20		
	21	23		Sunday	21		
	22	24		Monday	22		
	23	25		Tuesday	23		
	24	26		Wednesday	24		
	25	27		Thursday	25		
	26	28		Friday	26		
	27	29		Saturday	27		
	28	30		Sunday	28		
Sep-29	29	1	Elul	Monday	29		
	30	2		Tuesday	30		
	31	3		Wednesday	31		
	1	4		Thursday	32		
	2	5		Friday	33		
	3	6		Saturday	34		
	4	7		Sunday	35		
	5	8		Monday	36		
	6	9		Tuesday	37		
	7	10		Wednesday	38		
	8	11		Thursday	39		
	9	12		Friday	40		
	10	13		Saturday	41	End of Jesus' temptation by the Devil (Lk 4:1-2).	
	11	14		Sunday	42		
	12	15		Monday	43		
	13	16		Tuesday	44		
	14	17		Wednesday	45		
	15	18		Thursday	46		
	16	19		Friday	47		
	17	20		Saturday	48		
	18	21		Sunday	49		
	19	22		Monday	50		
	20	23		Tuesday	51		
	21	24		Wednesday	52	Completion of the walls of the Temple (Neh 6:15).	
	22	25		Thursday	1	Abomination (Satan) that desolates is set up (Dan 12:11).	
	23	26		Friday	2		
	24	27		Saturday	3	Wedding at Cana? (John 2:1-2).	
	25	28		Sunday	4	Spring equinox.	
	26	29		Monday	5	New moon.	
Oct-29	27	1	Tishri	Tuesday	6	0	Jesus was 30 years old. Beginning of the 70 th and final week of Daniel.
	28	2		Wednesday	7	1	Multitude enters into the covenant of the Kingdom (Heb 8:6).
	29	3		Thursday	8	2	
	30	4		Friday	9	3	
	1	5		Saturday	10	4	Jesus read the text of Isaiah 61:1 about the Jubilee (Luke 4:16-21).
	2	6		Sunday	11	5	
	3	7		Monday	12	6	
	4	8		Tuesday	13	7	
	5	9		Wednesday	14	8	
	6	10		Thursday	15	9	Yom Kippur.
	7	11		Friday	16	10	
	8	12		Saturday	17	11	
	9	13		Sunday	18	12	
	10	14		Monday	19	13	

Mar-33	19	28	Adar	Thursday	1275	1269	
	20	29		Friday	1276	1270	
	21	1	Nisan	Saturday	1277	1271	Beginning of Jubilee year
	22	2		Sunday	1278	1272	
	23	3		Monday	1279	1273	
	24	4		Tuesday	1280	1274	
	25	5		Wednesday	1281	1275	
	26	6		Thursday	1283	1276	
	27	7		Friday	1282	1277	
	28	8		Saturday	1284	1278	
	29	9		Sunday	1285	1279	
	30	10		Monday	1286	1280	
	31	11		Tuesday	1287	1281	
Apr-33	1	12		Wednesday	1288	1282	
	2	13		Thursday	1289	1283	
	3	14		Friday	1	1290	The continual [sacrifice] has been removed (Dan 12:11; Heb 10:1-14)
	4	15		Saturday	2	0	(Great) Sabbath (Jn 19:31)
	5	16		Sunday	3	1	Beginning of Pentecost (Lv 23:15-16).
	6	17		Monday		2	
	7	18		Tuesday		3	
	8	19		Wednesday		4	
	9	20		Thursday		5	
	10	21		Friday		6	
	11	22		Saturday		7	
	12	23		Sunday		8	
	13	24		Monday		9	
	14	25		Tuesday		10	
	15	26		Wednesday		11	
	16	27		Thursday		12	
	17	28		Friday		13	
	18	29		Saturday		14	
	19	30		Sunday		15	
	20	1	Iyyar	Monday		16	
	21	2		Tuesday		17	
	22	3		Wednesday		18	
	23	4		Thursday		19	
	24	5		Friday		20	
	25	6		Saturday		21	
	26	7		Sunday		22	
	27	8		Monday		23	
	28	9		Tuesday		24	
	29	10		Wednesday		25	
	30	11		Thursday		26	
May-33	1	12		Friday		27	
	2	13		Saturday		28	
	3	14		Sunday		29	
	4	15		Monday		30	
	5	16		Tuesday		31	
	6	17		Wednesday		32	
	7	18		Thursday		33	
	8	19		Friday		34	
	9	20		Saturday		35	
	10	21		Sunday		36	
	11	22		Monday		37	
	12	23		Tuesday		38	
	13	24		Wednesday		39	
	14	25		Thursday		40	
	15	26		Friday		41	
	16	27		Saturday		42	
	17	28		Sunday		43	
	18	29		Monday		44	
	19	1	Sivan	Tuesday		45	
	20	2		Wednesday		46	
	21	3		Thursday		47	
	22	4		Friday		48	
	23	5		Saturday		49	
	24	6		Sunday		50	The Jerusalem above (Gal 4:24-27) begins at the Pentecost (Acts 2:1,15).
	25	7		Monday			Happiness of the multitude of Messianic Jews (Dan 12:12).

Year 33 CE play therefore an important role in messianic prophecies. As the first prophecy quoted by Jesus was about the "liberty of captives" (Luke 4:1-21), which relied on Jubilee of 50 years (Leviticus 25:10), Jubilees calendar allow to check Bible chronology.

According to the biblical text, a jubilee was lasted 50 years and was ended with a release of the captives, regarded as a "jubilant" year. This system was codified after the Exodus, but as Maimonides says, even if the Sabbatical cycles (every 7 years) and Jubilee (every 50 years) were not observed, however, they were counted. The letters (a, b, c) in the table below refer to key dates marking the beginning or end of an event. The grayed areas mark periods of reigns or events in the life of a character, the dark gray areas indicate anchored periods and those coloured in blue refer to periods of 50 years of Jubilee cycle.

609	598	588	587		539	538	518	517	468	455		-18	29	33		133
a	b	c		d	e	f	g		h	i	j	k				
31	11	10	1		70			49	13		483		4		100	
			70										46			
18x50		50					50	9x50				50	2x50			

- a) Beginning of the 70-year Babylonian domination (609 BCE) which ends with the seizure of Babylon by Cyrus (539 BCE). The death of King Josiah (2 Kings 23:29), 4 years before the battle of Carchemish (Jeremiah 46:2) in 605 BCE, marks the end of the Judean kingdom legitimately established. Jehoahaz was enthroned by the people and reigned only 3 months (2Kings 23:31). Pharaoh Necho II, satrap of Nebuchadnezzar from 609 BCE (Against Apion I:133-137), enthroned Jehoiaquim who reigned 11 years (2Kings 23:34-36). Nebuchadnezzar then enthroned Zedekiah who reigned 11 years (2Kings 24:17-18) until the destruction of the Temple (587 BCE). Josiah's death marks the beginning of a period of 70 years of Babylonian domination (Jeremiah 25:11-12) beginning with the reign of Jehoiaquim (Jeremiah 27:1-7) after the Battle of Harran (609 BCE) and ending with the destruction of Babylon. It is noteworthy that the text of Matthew sets the beginning of the captivity "of" Babylon (Βαβυλῶνος), not "at", after the reign of Josiah (Matthew 1:11,17).
- b) During the 10th year of Zedekiah a jubilee "to proclaim liberty" is deliberately violated (Jeremiah 32:1), resulting in the destruction of the Temple and deportation to Babylon. The release associated with this jubilee occurs 50 years later (Jeremiah 34:8-11, 13-22).
- c) Destruction of the Temple dated 10/V/18 of Nebuchadnezzar (Jeremiah 52:12,13) according to the Babylonian reckoning (October 587 BCE). This "devastation of the temple" would last 70 years (Daniel 9:2).
- d) Destruction of Babylon (539 BCE) and liberation of exiles in Babylon on Cyrus' 1st year (Ezra 1:1-4) in 538 BCE.
- e) End of the 70-year desolation period and of the exile (517 BCE); beginning of a new 50-year Jubilee cycle, from the 4th year of Darius (Zechariah 7:1-5) in 518 BCE.
- f) First Jubilee celebrated, dated to Artaxerxes' 7th year, because Ezra's text mentions that on this year there was a tax exemption (Ezra 7:1,8,24) and a liberation of captives (Ezra 8:35). Jewish authorities agree that the count of Jubilees must start on this year⁴¹.
- g) Start of the 483-year period leading to the appearance of the Messiah, according to Daniel 9:25. Nehemiah adds that the command to re-establish and to rebuild Jerusalem was issued by Artaxerxes I in the 20th year of his rule (Nehemiah 2:1,5,8). According to this calendar, the Messiah was to come 483 years after Artaxerxes' 1st year, i.e. on the 13th year (= 20 - 7) after the first Jubilee of Ezra dated to Artaxerxes' 7th year. The appearance of the Messiah foretold by Daniel then was to occur 4 years before the end of the 11th Jubilee. Eusebius had already noted this point in his *Chronicle*, where he said that Jesus started preaching on Olympiad 202:1 (29 CE), which corresponded to the 81st

⁴¹ A. STROBEL - Ursprung und Geschichte des frühchristlichen Osterkalenders in: *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 121 (1977) pp. 92-95.

- Jubilee according to Hebrews' tradition. Eusebius⁴² dated the 71st Jubilee to 472/471 and noticed that 500 years (equivalent to 10 Jubilees) elapsed between -483 and -472.
- h) The sanctuary (*naos*) of the temple was completed in 46 years at the 1st Passover on April 30 CE (John 2:20), in agreement with Josephus (Jewish Antiquities XV:354, 380, 421).
 - i) Appearance of the Messiah. According to Luke 3:1,23, Jesus the Messiah came on Tiberius' 15th year (29 CE).
 - j) Messiah is cut off with nothing for himself at the half of the last week (Daniel 9:26-27) [of years], i.e. 3,5 years (7/2) after his appearance around October 29 CE.
 - k) Some coins dated during the revolt of Bar Korkhba were minted for a jubilee dated 133 CE, because the Bar Kokhba revolt took place over a period⁴³ from December 131 to September 135 during which the Jews have minted two coins⁴⁴ dated: one of *year 1 for the redemption of Israel* (132 CE) and another one: *year 2 for the freedom of Israel* (133 CE).

The dates of Artaxerxes' reign and of the 70-year desolation period are controversial. According to the Jubilee calendar, Artaxerxes' reign would have started in 475 BCE and not in 465. This gap is of no consequence for biblical chronology. The biblical text makes a distinction between two 70-year periods: one of slavery: the "70 years for Babylon", and another one: the "70 years of desolation and exile". Let us check:

- Isaiah relates how this slavery period was to end (Isaiah 44:28-45:13). He points out five features: The future conqueror of Babylon was 1) to be called Cyrus; 2) to submit the nations; 3) to rebuild Jerusalem; 4) to lay the foundations of the temple; 5) and to free the Jews from their exile in Babylon. *The One saying of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and all that I delight in he will completely carry out'; even in [my] saying of Jerusalem, 'She will be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'You will have your foundation laid. This is what Jehovah has said to his anointed one, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations (...) For the sake of my servant Jacob and of Israel my chosen one, I even proceeded to call you by your name; I proceeded to give you a name of honor, although you did not know me (...) I myself have roused up someone in righteousness, and all his ways I shall straighten out. He is the one that will build my city, and those of mine in exile he will let go. Babylonian domination began in -609 and ended in -539. Those "70 years for Babylon" are succeeded by a period that would close with the end of the exile and the rebuilding of the temple.*
- *And in the 1st year of Cyrus [in -538] the king of Persia, that Jehovah's word from the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah roused the spirit of Cyrus the king of Persia so that he caused a cry to pass through all his realm, and also in writing, saying: This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said: All the kingdoms of the earth Jehovah the God of the heavens has given me, and he himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God prove to be with him. So let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel (Ezra 1:1-3).* A passage of the Chronicles explains that if the 70 years of slavery in Babylon ended at Cyrus time, the main reason for the desolation (that was still lasting at Cyrus time) was the breaking of the sabbaths.
- *So he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who (...) proceeded to burn the house of the [true] God and pull down the wall of Jerusalem (...) Furthermore, he carried off those remaining from the sword captive to Babylon (...) until the royalty of Persia began to reign [in -539]; to fulfil Jehovah's word by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had paid off its sabbaths. All the days of lying desolated it kept sabbath, to fulfil 70 years. And in the 1st year of Cyrus the king of Persia, that Jehovah's word*

⁴² EUSEBE - S. Hieronymi interpretatio chronicae Eusebii pamphili
Paris 1846 Éd. Migne *Patrologia Latina* XXVII pp. 438-442, 570-574

⁴³ M. SARTRE - D'Alexandre à Zénobie
Paris 2001 Éd. Fayard pp. 601-607.

G. GOYAU - Chronologie de l'Empire romain
Paris 2007 Éd. Errances pp. 114-116.

⁴⁴ D. HENDIN - Guide to Biblical Coins
New York 2001 Ed. Amphora pp. 273-302.

by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished (...) This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said, 'All the kingdoms of the earth Jehovah the God of the heavens has given me, and he himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem (2Chronicles 36:17-23). This explanation about the reason of the desolation already appears in the first books of the Bible.

- *I shall indeed give your cities to the sword and lay your sanctuaries desolate (...) And I, for my part, will lay the land desolate (...) And you I shall scatter among the nations (...) At that time the land will pay off its sabbaths [during] all the days of its lying desolated, while you are in the land of your enemies. At that time the land will keep sabbath, as it must repay its sabbaths. [During all] the days of its lying desolated it will keep sabbath, for the reason that it did not keep sabbath during your sabbaths when you were dwelling upon it (...) Yet I, for my part, proceeded to walk in opposition to them, and I had to bring them into the land of their enemies. Perhaps at that time their uncircumcised heart will be humbled, and at that time they will pay off their error. And I shall indeed remember my covenant (...) and the land I shall remember. All the while the land was left abandoned by them and was paying off its sabbaths while it was lying desolated without them and they themselves were paying for their error (...) And yet for all this, while they continue in the land of their enemies, I shall certainly not reject them (Leviticus 26:31-44).* According to this text, the desolation period starts with the destruction of the city and of its sanctuary. The land and its temple must stay desolated for 70 years, and this period includes a time of humiliation or of deportation in an enemy country. The exile is included in the 70 years, but its length is not stipulated. It is linked to the desolation, but it differs from it. The beginning of the exile at Babylon is dated to Jehoiachin's 1st year (Ezekiel 40:1), that is 11 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the last exile is dated to Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year (Jeremiah 52:30), that is 4 years after the destruction of Jerusalem. However, the exile is at its maximum in 587, the year of the destruction of the temple (Jeremiah 52:28-30). According to the adopted chronology, the exile at Babylon ended in the 50th year of a Jubilee [588-538]. This is what Josephus says: *[Berosus] comes down to Nabopolassar, who was king of Babylon, and of the Chaldeans. And when he was relating the acts of this king, he describes to us how he sent his son Nabuchodonosor against Egypt, and against our land, with a great army, upon his being informed that they had revolted from him; and how, by that means, he subdued them all, and set our temple that was at Jerusalem on fire; nay, and removed our people entirely out of their own country, and transferred them to Babylon; when it so happened that our city was desolate during the interval of seventy years, until the days of Cyrus king of Persia (...) These [Berosus] accounts agree with the true histories in our books; for in them it is written that Nebuchadnezzar, in the eighteenth year of his reign, laid our temple desolate, and so it lay in that state of obscurity for 50 years (Against Apion I:131,132;154).* Josephus makes a distinction between two periods: one [of slavery] of 70 years which starts at the end of Nabopolassar's reign and which ends at the beginning of Cyrus' reign, and another period of 50 years which starts at the destruction of the temple and ends with the liberation by Cyrus and his command to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1,2). Eusebius (Preparatio evangelica IX:40:11; X:9:3-5; X:10:3-6) also distinguishes between several periods: two periods of 70 years and another one lasting 50 years. There are the "70 years for Babylon" from -609 to -539 and the "70 years of desolation" when there was no cult rendered in the temple at Jerusalem from -587 to -537. Although Mordecai (Esther 2:6) was still called a son of the exile under Xerxes' reign around 470, the bulk of the exiles had gone back to Jerusalem between -537 and -517.
- Zechariah's book throws some light on the link between the "70 years for Babylon" which end with the fall of Babylon in -539 and the "70 years of desolation" which begin with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in -587.
- *On the 24th day of the 11th month, that is, the month Shebat, in the 2nd year of Darius (...) the angel of Jehovah answered and said: O Jehovah of armies, how long will you yourself not show mercy to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, whom you have denounced these 70 years? (...) I shall certainly*

return to Jerusalem with mercies. My own house will be built in her (...) and a measuring line itself will be stretched out over Jerusalem (Zechariah 1:7,12,16). This message (dated to January/February -520) announced the near end of the 70 years of desolation and the oncoming completion of the temple and rebuilding of Jerusalem.

- *And it came to pass in the 4th year of king Darius, that the word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah in the 4th day of the 9th month, even in Chislev. (...) Should I weep in the 5th month, separating myself, as I have done these so many years? (...) Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the 5th and in the 7th month, even these 70 years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? (Zechariah 7:1-5, 1901 American Standard Version).* The words "these 70 years" in Zechariah 7:5 are the same as in Zechariah 1:12. They may be understood in two ways: "[in relation with] those 70 years", or "[during] those 70 years". The first meaning goes better with the context of Zechariah 1:12, the declaration being dated to Darius' 4th year [518 BCE], soon before the end of the 70-year desolation. Moreover, the fast of the 5th month that marked the destruction of the temple in -587 (beginning of the desolation) was still observed in -518, since we read: "Shall I weep in the fifth month?" and not "Had I to weep in the 5th month?" This 70-years span was to end with the liberation of the captives (end of the Jubilee) and with the rebuilding of the temple, an expression of God's mercy according to Jeremiah. The temple was inaugurated soon thereafter, in Darius' 6th year in -515 (Ezra 6:15,16). The twofold period of 70 years is confirmed by a passage from Daniel.
- *In the 1st year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes (...) I myself, Daniel, discerned by the books the number of the years concerning which the word of Jehovah had occurred to Jeremiah the prophet, for fulfilling the devastations of Jerusalem, [namely,] 70 years (...) And now listen, O our God, to the prayer of your servant and to his entreaties, and cause your face to shine upon your sanctuary that is desolated (...) Do open your eyes and see our desolated conditions and the city that has been called by your name (Daniel 9:1,2,17-24).* Let us say first that Darius the Mede is called Ugbaru in a Babylonian tablet; he ruled over Babylon and appointed governors (Daniel 6:1) during the 5 last months of his reign and died at the end of his 1st year of reign, on the 11 Arahsammu (November -538). So, one year after the destruction of Babylon, Daniel explains that the 70 years would also be the length of the desolation (which was to end in -517, since the temple was destroyed in -587).

The words "desolated and devastated land" are controversial, for they can mean either a "land deserted and without inhabitants" (literal meaning) or a "land without worshippers" (religious meaning). The biblical text favours the second meaning. Indeed, the start (as well as the end) of the literal exile cannot be dated accurately, since it expands between Nebuchadnezzar's 7th and 23rd year (Jeremiah 52:28-30) and the exile was still going on at Esther's time around -470 (Esther 2:6). However, the length of the religious exile (the period when there were "no worshippers") is easier to settle, since it runs from the destruction of the temple to the "liberation of the captives" on the 50th year of the Jubilee (religious meaning). The words "causing desolation (Daniel 9:27)" was understood by the Jews as the disappearance of the sacrifices in the temple (and consequently of the worshippers) and not as the disappearance of the inhabitants. When we read: *by reason of my house that is waste, while you are on the run, each one in behalf of his own house* (Haggai 1:1,9), text written in Darius' 2nd year (520 BCE), we may understand also that the temple was waste of worshippers, not of people. This religious meaning is used in Ezekiel, where it is said that Egypt would be: *desolate waste (...) for 40 years* (Ezekiel 29:10-12. This could not be understood in a literal way (a deporting of all Egyptian people in a foreign land would have left some traces). But the religious meaning "without worshippers" (Ezekiel 30:7,13) is appropriate, since Jeremiah states that the sign (the 40-year period was beginning) would be pharaoh Hophra's death (Jeremiah 44:29,30; Ezekiel 30:20-22), exactly as Zedekiah's death

marked the end of the worship in the temple. Pharaoh Hophra (whom Egyptian were viewing as a living god) was replaced in 570 by Amasis, a mere general, who ruled from 569 to 526. Pharaoh Hophra died a few years after the beginning of Amasis' reign, probably in 566, his death being reported as occurring soon after Amasis' 3rd year⁴⁵ [in -567]. Egypt then had no visible god (Pharaoh) between -566 and -526. Herodotus wrote: *It is said however that Amasis, even when he was in a private station, was a lover of drinking and of jesting, and not at all seriously disposed (...) when finally he became king he did as follows: -as many of the gods as had absolved him and pronounced him not to be a thief, to their temples he paid no regard, nor gave anything for the further adornment of them, nor even visited them to offer sacrifice, considering them to be worth nothing and to possess lying Oracles* (The Histories II:174).

The role of the Jubilee to mark the end of a captivity is a recurrent theme in the Bible. When Zerubbabel was appointed, Ezra says: *And in the 1st year of Cyrus [538 BCE] (...) Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God prove to be with him. So let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel-he is the [true] God-which was in Jerusalem* (Ezra 1:1-3). Zerubbabel's mission was twofold: To gather the Jews (Nehemiah 1:8,9; 7:5) and to rebuild the temple (Ezra 3:1,2): *And it must occur in that day that there will be the root of Jesse [Zerubbabel] that will be standing up as a signal for the peoples [in 538]. To him even the nations will turn inquiringly, and his resting-place must become glorious [the temple will be rebuilt] (...) to acquire the remnant of his people who will remain over from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros and from Cush and from Elam and from Shinear and from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. And he will certainly raise up a signal for the nations and gather the dispersed ones of Israel; and the scattered ones of Judah he will collect together from the four extremities of the earth* (Isaiah 11:10-12). The gathering of the dispersed ones would end by a Jubilee: *The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me [Zerubbabel, according to Zechariah 4:6-14], for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive [in 518/517 a Jubilee will put an end to the desolation] and the wide opening [of the eyes] even to the prisoners (...) And they must rebuild the long-standing devastated places; they will raise up even the desolated places of former times, and they will certainly make anew the devastated cities, the places desolate* (Isaiah 61:1-4). According to the Gospels, Zerubbabel's mission foretold in details Jesus' one. We read in Luke that Jesus proclaimed a year of liberation to come (Luke 4:18), and John reports that this liberation (Jubilee year) was to exceed a traditional Jubilee (John 8:36). This year of liberation is linked to Jesus' death in 33 CE (Romans 8:2), which marked a Jubilee (the one of 133 CE is well attested⁴⁶). The Biblical chronology, based on Jubilee cycles, then is independent from other chronologies.

THE JUBILEE CALENDAR

The Bible has a "messianic calendar"⁴⁷ which relies on the regular succession of sabbatical and Jubilee years. Though this system was very old (Leviticus 26:33-35), it was but scarcely observed. The very reason for the 70-year deportation was precisely the breaking of the sabbatical years (2Chronicles 36:21). And the liberation that happened after Babylon's destruction in 539, when the 70-year Babylonian domination [609-539] was over, is associated with Daniel's 70 weeks messianic prophecy. Some testimonies attest that the sabbatical years system was partly observed, as well as the exemption from certain debts. Some scholars have tried to reconstitute this calendar⁴⁸. According to the biblical text, the 7th year is a sabbatical one (Exodus 23:10,11), and the 50th year (Leviticus 25:8-11) is a

⁴⁵ G. DARESSY - Stèle de l'an III d'Amasis
in: Recueil de travaux relatifs à la philologie et à l'archéologie Paris 1900 pp. 1-9.

⁴⁶ J. FINEGAN - Handbook of Biblical Chronology
Massachusetts 1999 Ed. Hendrickson Publishers pp. 125-126.

⁴⁷ J.-F. LEFEBVRE - Le jubilé biblique
Göttingen 2003 Éd. Universitaires Fribourg pp. 77,85.

⁴⁸ J. FINEGAN - Handbook of Biblical Chronology pp. 126-130

Jubilee year. Some recent Jewish authorities include the Jubilee in the 49th year, but the Talmud⁴⁹ and the biblical text show that the Jubilee was the 50th year. Though they were not observed, Jubilees were counted. However, in the 2nd century before C.E. some Jewish mystics suggested that the liturgical calendar based on observation be replaced by a theological calendar based on computation. For example, we read in the Book of Jubilees (written between 150 and 100) that Jubilees were to last 49 years and that the year was to be 364-day long (Book of Jubilees VI:30-38). The Book of Enoch (written between 100 and 50) divides each year into four 3-month seasons, the 3 months being respectively 30, 30 and 31 days long; and it specifies that such year was 10 days longer than the 354-day lunar year (Book of Henoch LXXIV:10-LXXII:6). These mystic calendars⁵⁰, dissociated from observation, influenced Qumran Essenes. Anyway, in the 1st century, the Jubilee was generally considered as a 50-year period. Philo of Alexandria (De specialibus legibus II:110-117) explained (c. 30) the reasons for a 50-year Jubilee, and Josephus wrote in the 1st century: *They should do the same after 7 times 7 years, which in all are 50 years; and that 50th year is called by the Hebrews The Jubilee, wherein debtors are freed from their debts, and slaves are set at liberty; which slaves became such, though they were of the same stock, by transgressing some of those laws the punishment of which was not capital, but they were punished by this method of slavery. This year also restores the land to its former possessors in the manner following: - When the Jubilee is come, which name denotes liberty* (Jewish antiquities III:281-283). The counting of Jubilees became controversial in 130 CE, when a Talmud commentary (Nedarim 61a) related two different ways of counting the Jubilees: either every 49 or every 50 years. The Jews possibly were influenced by Babylonian chronology, since, according to tradition, the counting of Jubilees started again in Ezra time, in Artaxerxes' 7th year (dated to 458/457). The "freedom" year celebrated by Bar Kokhba thus fell in 131/132 if we go by 49-year Jubilees, but in 143/144 if we go by 50-year Jubilees. Indeed, if Artaxerxes' 7th year is dated to 468/467, Bar Kokhba's Jubilee did fall in 133/134.

The year of debts "remission" (*shemittah* in Hebrew) might point to the sabbatical year (Deuteronomy 15:1), but its exceptional "release (Deuteronomy 15:12)" aspect makes it apply only to the Jubilee year, also called a "year of liberty" for captives (Leviticus 25:10). In actual practice, regarding fallowing land and debts remission (returning of land possessions does not seem to have ever been applied), the Jubilee year looked the same as a second sabbatical year. It is possible to reconstitute this calendar from historical and archeological evidence. As a religious calendar, it starts on 1st Nisan. Only after the exile we can find a civil year beginning on 1st Tishri, like in surrounding nations, year ending with the crop (Exodus 23:16); but the biblical calendar was still beginning in Nisan (Exodus 12:2). Even if the passages of Nehemia 1:1 and 2:1 caused much ink to flow, the beginning of the year still was Nisan, since Nehemia first mentioned Kislev of the 20th year (after he came in Susa), then Nisan of Artaxerxes' 20th year. He further mentioned a 7th month (Nehemiah 7:73) duly counted from Nisan (Nehemiah 8:17,18). Sabbatical years and Jubilees also began in Nisan. The Talmud is less clear on this point, as this question was a theoretical rather than practical matter. The Jerusalem Talmud (Rosh Hashana III:4) notes that Tishri is spoken of as the 7th month of the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:9), which means that the first month was Nisan. Moreover, if the Jubilee year had begun in Tishri, it would have been on the 10th day, and so the nine first days would not belong to any year. According to Leviticus, the day chosen for sanctifying the Jubilee year was the day of the liberation of slaves, the Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27). The problem of knowing whether a debt could be cancelled in the case of a cow that had been bought at the end of the sabbatical year on

⁴⁹ R. SAMUEL – le livre des 613 commandements
Paris 1974 Éd. C.L.K.H 253-256.

⁵⁰ U. GLESSMER – Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls
in: The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty years Vol. II. 1999 Leiden pp. 213-237.

a doubled month (necessarily Adar) and had been cut up early the next year show that the sabbatical year ended in Adar and did begin in Nisan (Shebiith X:2). The Jubilee year also began on 1st Nisan, but was celebrated only on 10th Tishri.

HISTORICALLY ATTESTED SABBATICAL AND JUBILEE YEARS

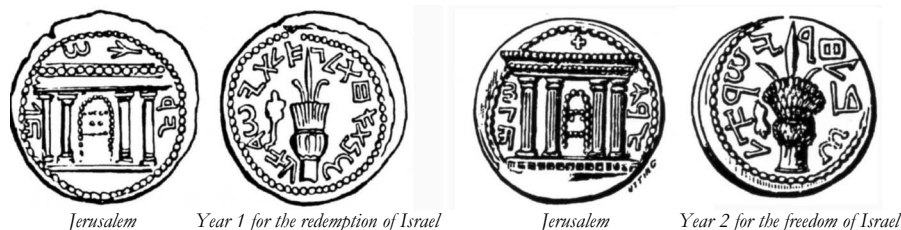
The Bar Kokhba revolt⁵¹ took place over a period which may be dated from December 131 to September 135 during which the Jews minted coins⁵², the first one dated *year 1 for the redemption of Israel* (132) then, *year 2 for the freedom of Israel* (133):

year	month	[A]	[B]	[C]	
131	8 V	15		[48]	[A] reign of Hadrian [C] No of year within the Sabbatical cycle
	9 VI				
	10 VII				
	11 VIII				
	12 IX				
132	1 X	16	0	[49]	[B] Bar-Kokhba revolt <i>Year 1 for the redemption of Israel</i> [C] Sabbatical year Quintus Tineius Rufus <i>governor of Judaea</i> G. Q. Certus Publicius Marcellus <i>governor of Syria</i>
	2 XI				
	3 XII				
	4 I				
	5 II				
	6 III				
	7 IV				
	8 V				
	9 VI				
	10 VII				
	11 VIII				
	12 IX				
133	1 X	17	2	[50]	<i>Year 2 for the freedom of Israel</i> [C] Jubilee year Eleutheropolis reconquered by the Romans
	2 XI				
	3 XII				
	4 I				
	5 II				
	6 III				
	7 IV				
	8 V				
	9 VI				
	10 VII				
	11 VIII				
	12 IX				
134	1 X	18	3	[1]	Jerusalem reconquered by the Romans <i>For the Freedom of Israel</i>
	2 XI				
	3 XII				
	4 I				
	5 II				
	6 III				
	7 IV				
	8 V				
	9 VI				
	10 VII				
	11 VIII				
	12 IX				
135	1 X	19	4	[2]	<i>For the Freedom of Israel</i> G. M. F. Sextus Iulius Severus <i>governor of Palestine</i> Death of Bar Kochba in Bethar <i>Papyrus Mur 30,8 dated 21 Tishri year 4 of the freedom of Israel</i>
	2 XI				
	3 XII				
	4 I				
	5 II				
	6 III				
	7 IV				
	8 V				
	9 VI				
	10 VII				
	11 VIII				
	12 IX				

⁵¹ According to Jerome: 3 years and 6 months are accounted for in Hadrian's reign, when Jerusalem was completely destroyed and the Jewish nation was massacred in large groups at a time, with the result that they were even expelled from the borders of Judaea (Commentary on Daniel 9:27).

⁵² D. HENDIN – Guide to Biblical Coins
New York 2001 Ed. Amphora pp. 273-302.

According to Dio Cassius (Roman History LXIX:12-15), the Jews revolted shortly after Hadrian passing on his second visit (August 131), when he decided to transform the city of Jerusalem into Colonia Aelia Capitolina. Eusebius, in his Chronicle, dates the suppression of the revolt in the 16th year of Hadrian (which started at 8 August), in agreement with the archives of the house of Babatha which stop on 19 August 132 (last document dated consuls Gaius Serrius Augurinus and Publius Trebius Sergianus 14 days before the Kalends of September)⁵³. The war reached its climax the 18th year of Hadrian in 134 (Ecclesiastical History IV:6:3). The last document from the revolt⁵⁴ is dated 21 Tishri, 4th year of the liberation of Israel (October 135). The 1st year of redemption (גאולת) therefore began around April 132 and the 2nd year of freedom (חרות) around April 133.



The Bar Kokhba war was conducted primarily to achieve a religious release rather than a political revolt for at least three reasons: 1) the coins minted during the revolt were not dated his reign, there is no coins of year 3 and 4 of Simon⁵⁵, 2) the Jerusalem Talmud (Ta'anit 68d) reports that the famous Rabbi Akiba applied to Bar Kokhba the messianic prophecy of the *Star rising from Jacob* (Numbers 24:17), the name of Bar Kosiba has also been changed to Bar Kokhba "son of the star" to match the prophecy and 3) the first coin was minted commemorating the "redemption of Israel", characterizing the buyout of the sabbatical year. A receipt also evokes this religious year⁵⁶: *On the twentieth of Shebat, Year two of the redemption of Israel by Simeon ben Kosiba, Prince of Israel, in the encampment situated at Herodium, Judah ben Baba said to Hillel ben Garis, "I of my own free will have subleased over to your jurisdiction on a sharecropping basis, this day, the land that is in my landholding which I leased on a sharecropping basis from Simeon Prince of Israel. This land have I subleased over to your jurisdiction from this day until the end of the eve of the release, which are full years, fiscal years five. (This is) the rent which I shall pay to you at Herodium"*⁵⁷. The 20th of Shebat (month X) Year 2 (February 134) matches the end of the Jubilee year. The normal sabbatical cycle of 7 years has 6 fiscal years but the 7th cycle (Jubilee) has only 5 fiscal years (= 7 years of the cycle - [1 sabbatical year + 1 jubilee year]).

Some evidence shows that the system of sabbatical and jubilee years was partially observed (as exemption of certain payments) which enables to reconstruct this calendar. According to the biblical text, the 7th year is a sabbatical year (Exodus 23:10,11) and the 50th year is a Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:8-11). Some recent Jewish authorities include the Jubilee in the 49th year, but the Talmud⁵⁸ and the Bible show that the jubilee year was the 50th. Even unobserved, jubilees were numbered. However, from the 2nd century BCE, some mystical Jews proposed to replace the liturgical calendar based on the observation by a

⁵³ Y. YADIN – Guide to Biblical Coins

Jerusalem 1989, Ed. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem pp. 28-29,116-117.

⁵⁴ E. SCHÜRER – The History of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135) Edinburgh 1987 Ed. T. & T. Clark LTD pp. 535-557.

⁵⁵ J. MALTIET-GERSTENFELD – 260 Years of Ancient Jewish Coins

Tel Aviv 1982, Ed. Kol Printing Service Ltd pp. 200-227.

⁵⁶ J. FINEGAN - Handbook of Biblical Chronology

Massachusetts 1999, Ed. Hendrickson Publishers pp. 125-130.

⁵⁷ J.A. FITZMYER – The Semitic Background of the New Testament

Michigan 1997, Ed. Eerdmans Publishing pp. 325-330.

⁵⁸ R. SAMUEL – le livre des 613 commandements

Paris 1974 Éd. C.L.K.H 253-256.

theological calendar based on calculations. We read, for example, in the Book of Jubilees (c. 160-150) that the jubilee should be 49 years and a year had to last 364 days (Book of Jubilees VI:30-38). The Book of Enoch (c. 100-50) divides the year into 4 regular seasons of 3 months respectively 30, 30 and 31 days, indicating that this year was 10 days longer than the lunar year of 354 days (Book of Enoch LXXIV:10-LXXII:6). These mystical calendars, unrelated to observation, influenced the Essenes of Qumran⁵⁹. However, in the 1st century, the majority opinion saw the jubilee a period of 50 years. Philo (De specialibus legibus II:110-117) for example explains (c. 30) the reasons a Jubilee lasts 50 years and Josephus wrote (c. 95): *He ordained, that they should do the same after 7 times 7 years, which in all are 50 years; and that 50th year is called by the Hebrews The Jubilee, wherein debtors are freed from their debts, and slaves are set at liberty; which slaves became such, though they were of the same stock, by transgressing some of those laws the punishment of which was not capital, but they were punished by this method of slavery. This year also restores the land to its former possessors in the manner following: - When the Jubilee is come, which name denotes liberty* (Jewish Antiquities III:281-283).

Counting the jubilees became controversial, however, from 135 CE. According to a comment from the Talmud (Nedarim 61a), the 50th year of Jubilee was to be counted as the first of the next cycle. It is possible that Babylonian chronology has influenced the Jews because, according to tradition, the count of jubilees started with Ezra at the 7th year of Artaxerxes (dated 458/457 in the Babylonian king lists). The year of "freedom" celebrated by Bar Kokhba fell therefore in 131/132, according to the reckoning with jubilees of 49 years, but 143/144 with biblical jubilees 50 years. In fact, if the 7th year of Artaxerxes is correctly dated in 468/467 the jubilee of Bar Kokhba falls actually 133/134.

The year of "release (*shemitah* in Hebrew)" of debts may designate a sabbatical year, but with its unique aspect of "liberation" this term applies only to the Jubilee Year which is also described as "year of liberation" of captives (Deuteronomy 15:1,12, Leviticus 25:10). In practice, the set-aside of land and the release of debts (restitution of properties has not ever been applied), the jubilee year was like a doubled sabbatical year.

As religious calendar, jubilee cycle begins at 1st Nisan. It was only after the Exile that there was a calendar year beginning on 1st Tishri like other nations in the region (harvest ending the agricultural year according to Exodus 23:16). But the biblical calendar began in Nisan (Exodus 12:2). Even if the passages from Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1 have spilled much ink, the beginning of the year remains Nisan⁶⁰ as Nehemiah speaks first of Kislev 20th year (20th year since his arrival at Susa) then of Nisan 20th year of Artaxerxes. Besides, then he speaks well of the 7th month corresponding to a year beginning in Nisan (Nehemiah 7:73, 8:17-18). Sabbatical years and jubilees also began in Nisan. On this issue the Talmud (written after 200 CE) is less clear, because it was more theoretical issue than practical. In Jerusalem Talmud the 7th month of a jubilee is mentioned at Tishri (Rosh Hashana III:4), so the 1st month of a jubilee was Nisan. In addition, if the Jubilee Year began in Tishri, from the text of Leviticus 25:9, it would have been on 10. However, in this case, the first 9 days would belong to a year that does not exist. The day chosen to sanctify the jubilee year corresponded to the day of liberation of slaves, at Yom Kippur (Leviticus 23:27). The issue of whether a debt is cancelled in the case of a cow purchased at the end of the sabbatical year, during a month doubled (thus necessarily Adar), and butchered at the beginning of the following year, shows that sabbatical year ended at Adar and began well from Nisan (Shebi'ith X:2). In fact, jubilee year also began on 1 Nisan, but was celebrated on 10 Tishri this year. Sabbatical and Jubilee years attested historically:

⁵⁹ U. GLESSMER – Calendars in the Qumran Scrolls
in: The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty years Vol. II. 1999 Leiden pp. 213-237.

⁶⁰ J. FINEGAN - Handbook of Biblical Chronology
Massachusetts 1999 Ed. Hendrickson Publishers p. 167.

- After the Bar Kokhba revolt, sabbatical years (release) are counted but no longer year of liberation (Jubilee) as can be seen from the dates on some tombstones: *10 of month Shebat, the 3rd year of the sabbatical cycle, year 346 of the destruction of the Temple (415/416), 1st of month of Marbeshwan, the 1st year of the release, year 364 of the destruction of the Temple (433/434), 3 of Adar, 7th year of the release, year 385 of the destruction of the Temple (454/455), 3 of Kislev, the 5th year of the sabbatical cycle, year 390 the destruction of the Temple (459/460)*⁶¹. The destruction of the Temple in 70 CE being dated 9 Ab (5th month), year 1 of the destruction of the Temple is from 1 Tishri (7th month) 69 CE to 1 Tishri 70 CE, and year 346 runs from 1 Tishri 415 to 1 Tishri 416. As year 433 is not mentioned as Jubilee, counting jubilees (of 50 years) seems to have ceased after 134 CE.

- 132/133, **133/134** -A contract dated to Bar Kokhba time (papyrus Mur 24 E) mentions a Jubilee year: *20th Shevat year 2 of the redemption of Israel by Shimeon ben Kosba, prince of Israel (...) This land I rented it to you from this day until the end of the eve of the release, which are full years, fiscal years five.* The 20th Shevat of year 2 corresponds to February 134 CE. The Jubilee year then ended in March/April (Nisan) 134 CE. The contract was to expire at the next sabbatical year, 5 years later, that is in 139/140. Then year 132/133, which preceded the Jubilee year, was indeed a sabbatical year⁶².
- 68/69 -According to the Talmud (Ta'anith 29a), Jerusalem temple was destroyed the year after a sabbatical year. The reckoning of years after the destruction of the temple is peculiar because this "one year after the destruction [of the Temple]" is from 9 Ab (5 August 70) to 1 Tishri (25 September 70), Year 2 is up to the next 1 Tishri (13 October 71). This "year 1" corresponding to the year 69/70 with a beginning on 1st Nisan, the previous year is therefore 68/69.
- 54/55 -A papyrus from Murabbaat, dated to Nero's 2nd year (13 October 55 to 12 October 56) mentions a sabbatical year⁶³ that was in progress in 55, it was then year 54/55(if counted from Tishri to Tishri).
- 40/41 -The Mishna (Sotah 7:8) relates that King Agrippa I read passages of the Deuteronomy in the synagogue on the 1st day of Sukkoth festival, on the 8th year, at the end of the sabbatical year. This event could only occur when Agrippa began to rule over Judea after having been appointed by emperor Claudius (41-54), that is in 41. The 8th year being 41/42, the preceding sabbatical year was 40/41.
- 33/34 -At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus preached a year of release to come (Luke 4:18), and he specified that it (Jubilee year) would be greater than that of a traditional Jubilee (John 8:36). This year of release is linked to his death (Romans 8:2) on 14th Nisan 33 which then marked the start of a Jubilee. As the Jews no longer observed sabbatical and Jubilee years, the New Testament does not mention it. However it can be noted that Jesus began preaching to large crowds only on 1st Nisan 32, which marked the start of the sabbatical year (John 6:1-10), and that the colt borrowed in Nisan 33 (Mark 11:3) was not paid for according to buying practices of the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25:13-16).
- 40/39 -According to Josephus (Jewish antiquities 14:16:2-4), Herod was appointed as king by Rome (around winter 40/39)⁶⁴ and began besieging Jerusalem during the spring of a sabbatical year. Herod conquered the city in 37, but the spring in question refers to the beginning of the campaign, that is 40/39 and not 37.

⁶¹ Y. WILFAND – Aramaic Tomstones from Zoar and Jewish Conceptions of the Afterlife in: *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 40 (2009) pp. 510-539.

B.Z. WATCHOLDER - The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period in: *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973) pp. 169-171, 182-183.

⁶² J. FINEGAN - Handbook of Biblical Chronology Massachusetts 1999 Ed. Hendrickson Publishers pp. 116-130

⁶³ B.Z. WATCHOLDER - The Calendar of Sabbatical Cycles During the Second Temple and the Early Rabbinic Period in: *Hebrew Union College Annual* 44 (1973) pp. 169-171.

⁶⁴ C. SAULNIER - Histoire d'Israël Paris 1985 Éd. cerf p. 195

- 133/132 -According to the Book of Maccabees, Simon went to Jericho in 177, in the 11th month (Shebat), and was killed with his two sons by Ptolemy (1Maccabees 16:14-16). Josephus specifies that this happened during a sabbatical year (Jewish Antiquities 13:8:1,2) which he dated to the 162nd Olympiad (132). Since the Seleucid year started in April 311, the year 177 corresponds to 133, and the sabbatical year is 133/132.
- 161/160 -According to the Book of Maccabees (1Maccabees 6:20,49), the siege of Bethsur began in 150 during a sabbatical year. Since the Seleucid year started in April 311 BCE, the year 150 ends April 161 BCE, and the sabbatical year is 161/160 (if counted from Tishri to Tishri).
- 331/332 -Josephus (Jewish Antiquities 11:8:4-5) says that when Alexander besieged Tyre, he requested the high-priest Yaddus to pay him the tribute formerly paid to Darius III. Because Yaddus explained it was then the 7th year (sabbatical year), the Jews were exempted. As the siege of Tyre ended approximately in June/July 332⁶⁵, and since it began seven months earlier according to Josephus (i.e. in November/December 333), the 7th year should have begun toward March/April (Nisan) 333.
- 454/453 -Nehemiah's text (Nehemiah 10:31) mentions a 7th sabbatical year that would have taken place after Artaxerxes' 20th year (Nehemiah 2:1), when Jerusalem walls were rebuilt and the Festival of Booths on the 7th month was celebrated (Nehemiah 8:14). This sabbatical year would be dated to Artaxerxes' 21st year.
- 468/467 -Ezra's text (Ezra 7:24) tells about a tax exemption on Artaxerxes' 7th year (Ezra 7:1-8), the year captives were released (Ezra 8:35). On this ground, Jewish authorities agree that Jubilees must be counted again from that date. Maimonides wrote in a treaty on this question: *With Ezra remissions (shemita) started being counted and after 7 of them the 50th year was sanctified. Even if the Jubilee was not observed [in the economical field, not in the liturgical one], those years were nevertheless counted for the remission to be sanctified*⁶⁶.
- 518/517 -Since the Jubilee cycle was in relation with the worship organized from the temple, it seems logical to have this calendar begin with the dedication of the temple. Zechariah's text specifies that God approved the temple in Darius I's 4th year (Zechariah 7:1,5,14, 8:9-19), that is in 518/517.
- 588/587 -Jubilee (not celebrated), dated the 10th year of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 32:1). It was a jubilee (violated) because it referred to "proclaim liberty" and was preceded by a sabbatical year (Jeremiah 34:8,14-17)" in the 9th year of Zedekiah (Jeremiah 39:1, 34:7).

Though Jubilees were not observed, they are attested in two ways: either by the specific phrase "to proclaim liberty" which was not used in relation with the sabbatical year, or by the indication of two successive sabbatical years. For example, in the Murabbaat papyrus, the year of redemption (גאולת), i.e. the sabbatical year, is followed by the year of liberty (חרות), i.e. the Jubilee year⁶⁷.

Cycle	Year	Year of the rebellion	Theme of the coin	Biblical year name
49	132/133	1	Year of redemption	Sabbatical year
50	133/134	2	Year of liberty	Jubilee year

The length of a Jubilee can be estimated from biblical periods: The 1st Jubilee cycle began after the entrance in the Promised Land (1488 BCE) and ended in Zedekiah's 10th year (588 BCE). This period lasted exactly 900 years, i.e. 18 x 50-year Jubilees. Between the sabbatical year of 133 and the one of 161, there are 28 years, that is 4 sabbatical years (4 x 7-year periods). Between the sabbatical year of 333 and the one of 133, there are 200 years,

⁶⁵ M. SARTRE - D'Alexandrie à Zénobie. Histoire du Levant antique
Paris 2001 Éd. Fayard pp. 74-79

⁶⁶ MAIMONIDES - *Hilbot Shemita VeYovel* 10:47 (en hébreu). Sive R. Mosis filii Maimon Tractatus de juribus anni septimi et jubilai
Frankfurt 1708 Ed. Henricus Maius

⁶⁷ D. HENDIN - Guide to Biblical Coins
New York 2001 Ed. Amphora pp. 283-302.

that is 4 x 50-year Jubilees. A 49-year Jubilee cycle (even with a maximum error of 2 years when the beginning at Tishri or Nisan is unknown) makes no sense, since the 200-year span = 28 x 7-year periods + 4 years. Along the same lines, there are 172 years (= 4x50 - 4x7) between the sabbatical year of 40 and the one of 133, and 172 years = 24 x 7-year periods + 4 years. The 4-year gap exceeds the possible 2-year error. The dates of the Jubilees then can be fixed as follows:

X = (Jubilee number)	0	1	11	13
Y = (date)	-517*	-467*	33	133

These dates can be calculated with the equation $Y = aX + b$, where $a = 50$ and $b = -517^*$ (518 BCE). The length of a Jubilee then is 50 years and the date of the first one in Artaxerxes I's 7th year is 468 BCE and not 458 BCE. According to this calendar, since the first Jubilee started in Artaxerxes' 7th year and the Messiah was to appear 483 years after Artaxerxes' 20th year ($20 - 7 = 13^{\text{th}}$ year of his reign), the Messiah announced by Daniel was to appear 4 years before the end of the 11th Jubilee. Eusebius already noticed this coincidence in his *Chronicle*. He wrote that Jesus began his ministry in Olympiad 202:1 (29 CE), this year corresponding to the 81st Jubilee in Hebrews' tradition. Eusebius also dated the 71st Jubilee to 472/471 and remarked that between those two dates there was a 500-year span equivalent to 10 Jubilees⁶⁸. Even if historical testimonies about Jubilees are not numerous, they confirm that the Jubilee cycle was 50-year long. Biblical testimonies on Jubilees also are scarce (because Jubilees were only counted), but they give some important chronological markers. The words "on the 7th year" indicates a sabbatical year, and the words "year to proclaim liberty" indicates a Jubilee year.

- **1488** Beginning of the Jubilee cycle, according to the Leviticus text, which stipulates: *When you eventually come into the land that I am giving you, then the land must observe a sabbath* (Leviticus 25:2). The Israelites were given the land by Joshua after a 5-year conquest (Joshua 11:23; 14:7,10). Scholars⁶⁹ noticed that the biblical Jubilee is associated to a process: "God brings out to give something." God brought the Israelites out of Egypt to give them a land, in the same manner that He brought Abraham out of Ur to give him an heir (Isaac) who was to take possession of the gate of his enemies (Genesis 22:17). The births of Abraham in 2038 and Isaac in 1938 resemble Jubilee events.
- **588** Non-celebrated Jubilee dated to Zedekiah's 10th year (Jeremiah 32:1). It was a true Jubilee since the very Jubilee prescription to "proclaim liberty" had been broken. This Jubilee had been preceded by a sabbatical year the 7th year (Jeremiah 34:8,14-17) in Zedekiah's 9th year (Jeremiah 39;1; 34:7).
- **538** Liberation (in a political sense) from Babylon under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was appointed as governor in Cyrus' 1st year (Ezra 1:1,4) to restore the temple and gather other captives disseminated in Egypt, Assyria, etc. End of the first Jubilee cycle.
- **518** Liberation (in a religious sense) under the leadership of high-priest Joshua in Darius' 4th year (Zechariah 7:1), after a 70-year period without worship (Zechariah 7:4; 8:9,15). Joshua seemingly accomplished Isaiah's promise to "proclaim liberty (Isaiah 61:2)". This release inaugurated a new Jubilee cycle.
- **468** Ezra's text mentions a tax exemption (Ezra 7:24) and a release of captives (Ezra 8:35) in Artaxerxes' 7th year (Ezra 7:1-8).
- **33** Jesus applies to himself Isaiah's promise to "preach a release to the captives (Luke 4:18)". This Jubilee release is associated to Jesus' death (Galatians 5:1) and is told to be greater than the release of a traditional Jubilee (John 8:36).

⁶⁸ EUSÈBE - S. Hieronymi interpretatio chronicae Eusebii pamphili
Paris 1846 Éd. Migne *Patrologia Latina* XXVII pp. 438-442, 570-574.

⁶⁹ J.-F. LEFEBVRE - Le jubilé biblique
Göttingen 2003 Éd. Universitaires Fribourg pp. 369,370.

CURRICULUM VITAE OF JESUS

In the decree *breviarium totius imperii* published in Rome on Monday 12 May 2 BCE, Caesar Augustus announced his registration called "inventory of the world" (Luke 2:1).

- Born in Bethlehem on Monday 29 September 2 BCE.
- Departure for Egypt to avoid the slaughter of newborns which took place on Thursday 25 December 2 BCE when Jesus was 3 months old (like Moses in the same situation, according to Acts 7:20-21).
- After Herod's death, on Monday 26 January 1 BCE, return to Nazareth (March 1 BCE).
- In 12 CE at the age of 12 years (and 6 months) he met High Priest Anne in the Temple.
- Baptized in Jordan, on Monday 1 August 29 CE, becoming the Messiah in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar at the age of 29 years and 10 months (Luke 3:1,23).
- Beginning of his ministry, on Tuesday 27 September 29 CE, at the age of 30 (Numbers 4:3). He announced the "release of captives" (Isaiah 61:1) in the synagogue of Nazareth on Saturday 1 October 29 CE (Luke 4:16-21).
- The merchants of the Temple are driven out during the 1st Passover of his Ministry, April 30 CE, and he announced that the sanctuary (Most Holy), although built for 46 years, would be destroyed (John 2:20).
- Beginning of a Jubilee year in 33 CE on 1st Nisan, Saturday 21 March 33 CE, in order to fulfil a release to the captives (Luke 4:18-21).
- The merchants of the Temple are driven out again in the 4th Passover of his ministry, on Monday 30 March 33 CE, which triggered hostilities against Jesus.
- The Last Supper was instituted at the beginning of Friday 14 Nisan (Thursday 2 April 33 CE from 18 hours).
- Death in Jerusalem, on Friday 3 April 33 CE to 15 hours, at the age of 33 years and 6 months just before a lunar eclipse described as "red blood" (Acts 2:20).