



A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE TIMELINE

Graham Marks

Copyright © 2025 Graham Marks

Unless indicated otherwise, Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The Creation Week.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Interpretative Key 1: Bible Time Accounting Is Different than Modern Methods.....	6
Calculations.....	7
Commentary	8
<i>The Antediluvian Patriarchs</i>	<i>9</i>
Interpretative Key 2: There Are No Gaps in Genesis 5 and 11	9
Calculations.....	9
<i>The Flood and the Postdiluvian Patriarchs</i>	<i>11</i>
Interpretative Key 3: There Are Thirty Days in a Standard Biblical Month	11
Calculations.....	11
Commentary	12
<i>Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob</i>	<i>14</i>
Calculations.....	14
<i>Moses and Joshua</i>	<i>16</i>
Calculations.....	16
Commentary	20
<i>The Time of the Judges and the United Kingdom.....</i>	<i>23</i>
Calculations.....	23
Commentary	33
<i>The Divided Kingdom from Rehoboam and Jeroboam to Jehu.....</i>	<i>34</i>
Interpretative Key 4: Jeroboam Set the Northern Calendar Year to Start in the Eighth Month	34
Interpretative Key 5: Lengths of Reigns Do Not Consistently Start or End with Either a Co-Reign or a Full Reign.....	35
Interpretative Key 6: For Judean Kings Who Were Co-Regents with Their Fathers, Their Listed Ages Refer to the Beginnings of Their Co-Reigns	35
Calculations.....	36
<i>The Divided Kingdom from Jehu to the Assyrian Exile</i>	<i>44</i>

Interpretative Key 7: Jehu Restored the Southern Calendar in Northern Israel.....	44
Calculations.....	44
Commentary	53
<i>The Last Days of Judah</i>	56
Calculations.....	56
<i>70 Years in Babylon</i>	64
Commentary	69
<i>Seven Weeks of Persian Rule</i>	70
Calculations.....	70
<i>Sixty-Two Weeks of Intertestamental History and the Week of the Messiah</i>	78
Calculations.....	78
Commentary	81
<i>The Life of Jesus</i>	88
Calculations.....	88
Commentary	95
<i>The Last Days and the First Jewish-Roman War</i>	96
Calculations.....	96
Commentary	108
<i>The Beginning of the Millennium and the Third Jewish-Roman War</i>	109
Calculations.....	109
<i>The Future</i>	115
<i>Numerically Ordered List</i>	120
<i>Appendix A: Bible Evidence for a First-Century Parousia</i>	130
<i>Appendix B: A Pretermillennialist Timeline for the New Testament Canon</i>	134

Introduction

The title of this work reflects how, in an attempt to determine the age of the earth according to Scripture, I ended up on a journey through the Bible's timeline that led me to incredible discoveries. The starting point of my research was the Biblical chronology resources publicly available through James B Jordan's Biblical Horizons ministry, so a significant amount of credit goes to him for giving me a foundation and also helping me get "unstuck" several times.

The format I will use in this book is to divide the Bible into logical sections where chronological analysis has natural starting and stopping points. Within those sections, I will highlight any "interpretative keys" that are essential to understanding the Bible timeline.¹ I will also include calculations that can be made once the keys are understood, as well as commentary on any particularly interesting numerology or symbolism.

An important attribute of these interpretative keys, as well as the solutions I propose for specific chronological challenges, is that they are often based around what I call "Less Obvious Literal Interpretations" (LOLIs). The Bible's timeline cannot be harmonized internally without accepting that the most seemingly obvious interpretation of many key passages is not correct. Instead, there are less obvious but still literal interpretations that must be discovered. Once you uncover them, you begin to see connections between Scripture passages that previously seemed unrelated and find unexpected numerical implications.

I have come to believe that God designed the Bible this way for three reasons:

- To conceal the faith from those who do not humble themselves like children (Matthew 18:3-4) and seek truth instead of demanding truth be forced upon them.
- To present an intellectual puzzle to those who seek to uncover the mysteries of Scripture (Proverbs 25:2).
- To strengthen the faith of those who dive deep into Bible chronology and see how it displays evidence of intelligent design. Within the various texts written by many authors across thousands of years and handed down through numerous scribes:
 - There is sufficient information in the Bible to build a comprehensive timeline.
 - There is no extraneous or irrelevant data to filter out.
 - There is no outlier data that requires unreasonable interpretations to accommodate.

¹ I will indicate which keys I took from Jordan, which keys I developed on my own (as far as I can recall), and which ones are from generally available theology.

- Information is distributed in such a way that the entire Bible is required to develop the timeline (for example, understanding the timeline of major sections of the Old Testament requires information from the New Testament).

In order to develop the timeline, I will progress through the Bible in roughly canonical order, although occasionally I will have to bring in later verses for context, table questions temporarily, or even calculate backwards instead of forwards.

At the end of this document, I have included a complete consolidated and chronologically sorted timeline, with years highlighted as appropriate for significant mathematical properties.

The Creation Week

Interpretative Key 1: Bible Time Accounting Is Different than Modern Methods²

The Bible writers did not measure time the same way we do. We generally think of years lived or years ruled in terms of complete 12-month periods, starting from the day of birth or of a king being crowned. In the Bible, however, length of time is measured according to the years in which events occur.

How this works:

- The year someone is born or begins reigning is year zero. However, the Bible doesn't use the word "zero" to describe that year. Instead, it simply indicates that in that year, someone was born or began reigning or, in the case of Adam, was created.
- A person lives or reigns for one year after they cross their first New Year line. It doesn't matter what dates they start and stop on or whether there are more or less than 12 months between those two dates. Every additional year of life or reigning starts with each New Year.
- If the entirety of a life or reign occurs within a single calendar year, then the length of it will be given in days or months.
- In a royal transition, the calendar year in which the first king dies (or establishes a co-reign) is counted as a year of their reign, even if they didn't live (or rule solo) all year. That calendar year is also "year 0" for the new king (the year the new king "began to reign").

For example, Adam was created in what we today would call the "first year" of creation. However, the Bible would call that first year "the year Adam was created." Numerically, we would set that year to "0." Then the next calendar year would be year 1 and would be Adam's first year.

Adam was 130 when Seth was born, so that would be Adam's one hundred and thirtieth year in the numerical year 130. That year would be "the year Seth was born," but it wouldn't be Seth's "first year." Instead, the following year, 131, would be the 131st year of Adam and the 1st year of Seth.

This makes chronology very easy to track in the Bible, because we don't have to worry about what months things happen in, and therefore we don't ever get confused about what calendar year events occur in, because the calendar year is paramount in counting

² Credit: me. Remember: I'm not saying I invented this, but rather that I developed this idea independently (as far as I can remember) and don't know whether others have done so before me.

lifespans and reigns. It also makes lifespans and reigns very easy to stack on top of each other numerically (you just add the numbers together).

This is also why birthdays are rarely mentioned in the Bible: the Jews did not care about birthdays once a person crossed their first New Year line. At that point, a person's lifespan would be counted according to how many calendar years they lived through.

Evidence for this system is not just the way lifespans are given throughout the Bible, but also the fact that it's the only way to explain the length of reigns and the connection points between Northern and Southern kings in 1 and 2 Kings. It also explains why David is said to have reigned in Hebron seven years and six months in 2 Samuel 2:11, 2 Samuel 5:5, and 1 Chronicles 3:4, but only seven years in 1 Kings 2:11 and 1 Chronicles 29:27: the seven years and six months had to do with an absolute length of time, but David crossed the New Year line only seven times in Hebron and so could also be said to have reigned "seven years" there.

This system is not used for, say, counting the number of children a person has. The boy who opens the womb is still the "first" child. But when it comes to chronology, it is akin to a building having a ground floor, and then the floor above the ground floor being the "first floor."

Calculations

0: God creates, structures, and populates the heavens and earth

0: Adam and Eve fall

Exodus 20:11 and 31:17 suggest that the creation week lasted seven literal days. Models that deny this are generally built around an attempt to accommodate naturalistic scientific paradigms that assume there are no such thing as miracles. As the Bible clearly demands the existence of a God who performs miracles, such attempts are unfaithful to the intended meaning of the text.

Until a model is provided that makes better sense of how the Bible is *intended* to be interpreted than the traditional creationist view, we find that assuming the creation days were literal days explains God's absence at the time of Adam and Eve's fall. God was absent during the temptation of Eve by the serpent because it occurred on the seventh day, and He was resting (Genesis 2:3).

Given this understanding, we can make sense of the creation week. When Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," that is happening at the

beginning of what we today would consider the “first day.” However, the Hebrews would count it as “Day 0” and call it “the day in which God created the heavens and the earth.”

Note that humans consider the daytime the first half of the day, since we begin working in the day and rest at night. In fact, Jewish timekeeping started at daybreak, not in the middle of the night like ours does (see, for example, Acts 2:15³). However, in Genesis 1:5, we see that starting in Day 1, God called the nighttime the first half of the day (“there was evening and there was morning, Day 1”). This means the accounted length of Day 0 was only half a day, and the following evening was part of Day 1.⁴

Adam would have been created in the daytime (second half) of God’s Day 6, so Adam’s timekeeping would have begun on the second half of God’s Day 6 at daybreak, which would be the beginning of humanity’s “Day 0.” God would have left to rest, and Adam and Eve would have slept through the following nighttime (second half of man’s Day 0, first half of God’s Day 7). The Serpent would then have tempted them in the following daytime (first half of man’s Day 1, second half of God’s Day 7).

Thus, as Adam was created on God’s Day 6, which the Bible would call “the day Adam was created,” Adam fell on his “first day” of existence. God would have returned right at the beginning of His Day 8, in the “cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8), when night was falling on Adam’s Day 1.

Commentary

The exact timing of this sequence of events sets up three patterns we see in the rest of the Bible:

- Man fails on a seventh day (or year).
- God saves on an eighth day (or year), especially at the beginning of the eighth day (or year). It was at that point God promised a savior (Genesis 3:15) and covered Adam and Eve with bloody animal skins to foreshadow Jesus’ sacrifice (Genesis 3:21). This is why circumcision was done on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3).
- Because the daytime of Day 7 was Adam’s “first day,” human covenant leaders fall immediately after the establishment of a covenantal system.

³ I personally think this method makes a lot more sense.

⁴ This makes sense when you consider that people are born at any point during a calendar year, and thus their “year 0” is rarely a full year.

The Antediluvian Patriarchs

Interpretative Key 2: There Are No Gaps in Genesis 5 and 11⁵

Much as with creationism, there seems to be no improvement to interpreting the timeline of the patriarchs of Genesis by inserting unmentioned gaps, other than to accommodate naturalistic science. While concealed gaps are certainly possible anywhere in the Bible timeline, they would have to be revealed by cross-referencing a different part of Scripture, according to the literal method I am using. No such cross-references exist for Genesis.

Therefore, if there are gaps in Genesis 5 and 11, it is impossible to construct a timeline of Bible history from the Bible alone, which runs so contrary to the obvious intent of the wealth of carefully designed chronological data in Scripture as to be (from my perspective) intellectually untenable for someone who deep dives this aspect of God's Word.

Calculations

- 130:** Birth of Seth (Genesis 5:3)
- 235:** Birth of Enosh (Genesis 5:6)
- 325:** Birth of Cainan (Genesis 5:9)
- 395:** Birth of Mahalalel (Genesis 5:12)
- 460:** Birth of Jared (Genesis 5:15)
- 622:** Birth of Enoch (Genesis 5:18)
- 687:** Birth of Methuselah (Genesis 5:21)
- 874:** Birth of Lamech (Genesis 5:25)
- 930:** Death of Adam (Genesis 5:5)
- 987:** God takes Enoch (Genesis 5:23)
- 1042:** Death of Seth (Genesis 5:8)
- 1056:** Birth of Noah (Genesis 5:28)
- 1140:** Death of Enosh (Genesis 5:6)
- 1235:** Death of Cainan (Genesis 5:14)

⁵ Credit: Jordan, general theology.

1290: Death of Mahalalel (Genesis 5:17)

1422: Death of Jared (Genesis 5:20)

1651: Death of Lamech (Genesis 5:31)

1656: Death of Methuselah (Genesis 5:27)

The Flood and the Postdiluvian Patriarchs

Interpretative Key 3: There Are Thirty Days in a Standard Biblical Month⁶

In the Bible, the standard Hebrew year is 12 months x 30 days / month = 360 days.⁷

Calculations

1656: The Flood (Genesis 7:6)

The Flood began on the 17th day of the second month of 1656 (Genesis 7:11) and ended on the 17th day of the seventh month (Genesis 8:4). That means the 150 days the waters were completely covering the earth (Genesis 7:24; Genesis 8:3) were exactly five 30-day months and included the forty days of flooding (Genesis 7:17).

1556: Birth of Shem

There is some confusion around the birth of Shem. Genesis 11:10 can easily be taken to mean that Shem was 100 when he begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. In this thinking (which appears to be Jordan's), Shem wasn't the oldest, Noah's three children are given out of order in Genesis 5:32, and Noah was 100 when he birthed whoever was the oldest.

The problem with this is that it renders Genesis 5:32, and especially the similar verse Genesis 11:26, completely meaningless. Why would the author of Genesis record those numbers if they didn't have any impact on the chronology?

A simple fix is to interpret 11:10 as such: "Shem was 100 years old (at the time of the Flood) and begot Arphaxad two years after the Flood." This means that Shem was born when Noah was 500, that the children are listed in birth order (as are Terah's), and that Genesis 5:32 and Genesis 11:26 mean exactly what they appear to mean.

The numerological implications of adopting this interpretation (discussed later) are confirming evidence for its truth.

1657: Noah leaves the ark (Genesis 8:13-18)

1658: Birth of Arphaxad (Genesis 11:10)

1693: Birth of Salah (Genesis 11:12)

1723: Birth of Eber (Genesis 11:14)

⁶ Credit: general theology.

⁷ There must have been occasional adjustments to keep the calendar in sync with the seasons, given the 365-day orbit of the earth around the sun.

1757: Birth of Peleg (Genesis 11:16)
1757: Tower of Babel (Genesis 10:25)
1787: Birth of Reu (Genesis 11:18)
1819: Birth of Serug (Genesis 11:20)
1849: Birth of Nahor (Genesis 11:22)
1878: Birth of Terah (Genesis 11:24)
1996: Death of Peleg (Genesis 11:19)
1997: Death of Nahor (Genesis 11:25)
2006: Death of Noah (Genesis 9:29)
2026: Death of Reu (Genesis 11:21)
2049: Death of Serug (Genesis 11:23)
2083: Death of Terah (Genesis 11:32)
2096: Death of Arphaxad (Genesis 11:13)
2126: Death of Salah (Genesis 11:15)
2158: Death of Shem (Genesis 11:11)
2187: Death of Eber (Genesis 11:17)

Commentary

Point 1

Methuselah died the year of the Flood. While it's possible he was wicked and was killed in the Flood accordingly, it's more likely (especially given his long lifespan) that he was the last righteous man on earth left besides Noah. At the time Noah was commanded to build the ark, Methuselah (Noah's grandfather) would still have been another living righteous man, but the grace found in God's eyes for Noah (Genesis 6:8) wasn't relevant to Methuselah because he was so unbelievably old and wouldn't be part of the new world Noah would build. Instead, God waited until Methuselah's death to send the flood waters upon the earth.

Point 2

The true meaning of Genesis 11:10 foreshadows the format used for kings later, i.e., “Seth was 100 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years (before he began a co-reign with Arphaxad).” I believe this was done intentionally, as God authorized kingly rule after the flood (signaled by the introduction of capital punishment in Genesis 9:6).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Calculations

1948: Birth of Abram (Genesis 11:26)

2023: Abram enters Canaan (Genesis 12:4)

A careful reading of Genesis 11 and 12 reveals that Abram did not leave for Canaan the year his father died. Genesis 12:1 says that the Lord “had said” to Abram to leave Ur for Canaan. Genesis 11:31 shows that Terah apparently started that journey with Abram but stopped for whatever reason along the way and settled in Haran. Genesis 12:4 indicates that Abram decided to continue following God’s call and completed the journey without him. Terah continued to live in Haran many years before he finally died (in fact, he only died a few years before Sarah did).

To figure out the year Abram was born and the year he entered Canaan, we have to work forward from Terah’s birth, not backwards from his death.

2033: Abram marries Hagar (Genesis 16:3)

2034: Birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:16)

2047: Beginning of circumcision (Genesis 17:1; Genesis 17:24-25)

2047: Renaming of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 17:1)

2048: Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

According to Genesis 17:21, Isaac would be born 12 months (“at this set time next year”) after circumcision was instituted.

When the angels visited Abraham before destroying Sodom and Gomorrah, Sarah laughed when she heard the promise repeated in Genesis 18:10, implying that she was not yet pregnant. But in Genesis 18:14 the pre-incarnate Jesus (as indicated by Genesis 18:1) said, “At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” He makes no mention of “next year,” implying that it will be in the same calendar year they are currently speaking in. And He mentions “the time of life,” which presumably means the standard 9-10 months of human pregnancy.

Therefore, circumcision must have been instituted late in 2047, and the angels visited two to three months later in early 2048.

2048: Birth of Isaac (Genesis 21:2)

2085: Death of Sarah (Genesis 17:17; Genesis 23:1)

2123: Death of Abraham (Genesis 25:7)

2171: Death of Ishmael (Genesis 25:17)

2088: Isaac marries Rebekah (Genesis 25:20)

2108: Birth of Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:26)

2148: Esau marries Judith and Basemath (Genesis 26:34)

2228: Death of Isaac (Genesis 35:28)

Note: To calculate the dates of events between Jacob's birth and the descent into Egypt, we have to work backwards.

2238: Descent of Jacob's household into Egypt (Genesis 47:9)

2236: Famine begins (Genesis 45:6)

2229: Joseph becomes governor of Egypt (Genesis 41:29-30)

2227: Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker (Genesis 41:1)

2216: Joseph sold into slavery (Genesis 37:2)

2205: Jacob flees from Laban (Genesis 31:41)

2199: Birth of Joseph (Genesis 41:46)

2199: Jacob's second 7 years of service for Rachel end (Genesis 30:25-26)

2192: Jacob's initial 7 years of service for Rachel end (Genesis 29:30)

2192: Jacob marries Leah and Rachel (Genesis 29:20)

2185: Jacob flees from Esau to Laban (Genesis 29:20)

We can move forward again once we move past the descent into Egypt.

2243: Famine ends (Genesis 45:11)

2255: Death of Jacob (Genesis 47:28)

2309: Death of Joseph (Genesis 50:22)

Moses and Joshua

Calculations

2453: The Exodus

2453: God gives the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai

According to Galatians 3:16-17, there were 430 years between Genesis 12:7 (the promise to Abraham and his Seed) and the giving of the Law. This means Moses went up to Mount Sinai in 2453.⁸ Exodus 12:2 indicates that the original Passover happened at the beginning of the calendar year.

However, Exodus 12:40-41 says that the Exodus itself occurred 430 years after Israel began sojourning in Egypt. There are two possible explanations for this:

- Moses is starting the beginning of the counting of the sojourn as Abram's descent into Egypt in Genesis 12:10.
- Both the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint say that Israel was in Egypt "and Canaan" for 430 years. This is also probably starting from Genesis 12:10, in which case the previous option might still be correct, and this text was just added for context, or else the original Bible text included the phrase "and Canaan," and thus Israel was in Egypt and Canaan (whether starting from Genesis 12:5 or Genesis 12:10) for 430 years.

This timeline conflicts with the common belief that the 430 years stretched from Jacob's descent into Egypt to the Exodus, and the 400 years of affliction/oppression (Genesis 15:13; Acts 7:6) were the slavery under the Pharaohs. Beyond Galatians 3, there are two pieces of evidence demonstrating that the common belief cannot be true (and that we are dealing with a LOLI).

First is the genealogy of Moses in Exodus 6:14-27. Moses was a descendant of Kohath, the son of Levi, and according to Genesis 46, Kohath was alive at the time of the descent into Egypt. To stretch Moses' genealogy to the greatest length possible, let's assume that Kohath was a newborn at the time of the descent and that every generation fathered the next the year they died (even though neither is likely to have been the case). Amram would have to be born in $2238 + 133 = 2371$. Moses would have to be born in $2371 + 137 = 2508$. Moses was 80 the year before the Exodus (Exodus 7:7). Therefore, at the most logical extreme of his genealogy, the Exodus would have occurred in $2508 + 81 = 2589$. However, if

⁸ Credit to Jordan for this idea and most of the arguments I'm using to support it.

the 430 years started in 2238, then the Exodus would have occurred in 2668. That's not supported by Moses' genealogy.

Second, if the 430 years started with Jacob's descent into Egypt, then the 400 years of affliction/slavery would have begun 30 years after the descent in 2238. However, Jacob died 17 years after the descent, at which point, all of Egypt mourned for him (Genesis 50:3) and the Pharaoh gave leave to Joseph to bury him. That means:

- The Israelites multiplied from 70 persons to a threatening multitude (Exodus 1:9) within 30 years. Even if the 57 grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Jacob each had a child every year for 30 years (not possible because some of them were not old enough to have kids at the time of the descent into Egypt), there would only be 1767. That's not enough people to scare an entire nation.
- Joseph's Pharaoh died, a new Pharaoh arose, and the new Pharaoh turned the entirety of Egypt against Joseph, the man who had saved all their lives from the famine, within 13 years.
- The slavery began 41 years *before* the death of Joseph and, if Levi was born in 2194 and lived 137 years (Exodus 6:16) and therefore died in 2331, it also began 63 years before the death of Levi. The end of Genesis 50 and the beginning of Exodus 1, however, imply that Jacob's sons lived and died in peace in Egypt and only after their descendants multiplied did the Pharaohs turn against them.
- There were 319 years between the start of the slavery and the birth of Moses. However, the first 5 chapters of Exodus (especially Exodus 2:23) imply that Moses was born during the reign of the Pharaoh who instituted the slavery. Also, the fact that Moses' mother had to hide him but not Aaron, who was only three years older, implies that the command by Pharaoh to murder Hebrew newborn boys (Exodus 1:22) started at some point between Aaron's birth and Moses'. Aaron would have been one of the boys spared by the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:15-17).

In reality, the 400 years of affliction must have started in 2053. The only significant recorded event around that time was the weaning of Isaac and the driving out of Hagar and Ishmael, so James Jordan has tied the affliction to the persecution of Isaac by Ishmael (Galatians 4:29).⁹ I think this is possible, but it also matters that Hagar was an Egyptian, so the affliction of Isaac by Ishmael, the son of an Egyptian, also connected to the eventual enslavement of Israel by Egyptians.

As for the question of how Israel got so massive in 215 years, it is probable that many converted foreigners joined their ranks (something similar happened in Esther 8:17). Even if the 430 years started when Jacob went to Goshen, it is unlikely that all of their growth from

⁹ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1994/05/01/6_05/

70 persons to over 600,000 men happened via biological reproduction in under 500 years, especially when you consider that the entire nation had only two midwives when Moses was born (Exodus 1:15).

If conversion and foreigners identifying themselves as part of Israel was the primary vehicle of growth for Israel, then Pharaoh's attempt to slow Israel's growth had a spiritual flavor in addition to a military one (Exodus 1:10): namely, Exodus 1:12 could suggest that persecution improved their witness and ability to win converts, much as the persecution of Christians led to explosive growth in the first-century Church.

2452: Moses and Aaron first stand before Pharaoh

If the Exodus occurred right at the beginning of 2453, then Moses and Aaron would have first stood before Pharaoh in the later part of the previous year, 2452.

2369: Birth of Aaron (Exodus 7:7)

2372: Birth of Moses (Exodus 7:7)

2412: Moses flees to Midian (Acts 7:23; Acts 7:30)

2453: The manna begins

2454: The Tabernacle is erected

2454: The second Passover

The Exodus occurred midway through the month of Abib, which was to be the first month of the year for the Israelites going forward (Exodus 12:2), most likely because it was the first month since creation and God was ensuring the Israelite calendar matched the historic calendar.

Later in Exodus, we see manna being given in “the second month after [the Israelites] departed from the land of Egypt” (Exodus 16:1) and the Law being given on Mount Sinai in “the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 19:1). These would have happened several months into the year 2453.

However, at the end of the book, we see the Tabernacle being erected “in the first month of the second year” (Exodus 40:17). This was followed by another Passover “in the first month of the second year after [the Israelites] had come out of the land of Egypt” (Numbers 9:1). There is no mention of “the first year after the Exodus” anywhere, nor do the narrative events of the Torah justify an entire two calendar years passing between the first Exodus and the erection of the Tabernacle, nor is it likely Moses neglected to mention the Passover that occurred (or was skipped) one year after the first Passover.

The most logical interpretation of the language here is that because the Exodus occurred right at the beginning of the calendar year of 2453, the remainder of that year would have been “the first year after the Exodus,” and it took that entire year to prepare the Tabernacle (and all the other elements of the Tabernacle worship system), immediately after which the Israelites began observing the full Law and then celebrated their second Passover in 2454.

This lines up with the numerological symbolism that will be explored in the Commentary section.

2454: First census of Israel (Numbers 1:1)

2454: The Israelite spies discourage Israel, causing all male Israelites age 20 and above (except Joshua and Caleb) to be condemned to die while wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 10:11)

2492: Aaron dies (Numbers 33:38)

2492: Second census of Israel

In the narrative of Numbers, the second census occurs after Aaron’s death, although that isn’t conclusive, as the events are not always told in strict chronological order. However, in Deuteronomy 2:14, Moses says that the destruction of the entire Exodus Generation took 38 years. According to Numbers 26:63-65, the entire Exodus Generation (except Joshua and Caleb) had died out before the second census was held. Moreover, Eleazer had replaced Aaron as high priest by the time of the census.

As the judgment was pronounced on that generation in 2454, that means it was completed 38 years later in 2492, after which the second census was held. This fits the general flow of events in Numbers and Deuteronomy.

2492: Moses writes Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 1:3)

2492: Moses dies (Deuteronomy 34:7)

2492: Joshua takes over as leader of Israel

Moses wrote Deuteronomy at the beginning of the eleventh month of 2492 (Deuteronomy 1:3). He died shortly afterward, and the Israelites mourned him for 30 days (Deuteronomy 34:8), meaning that the transition from Moses to Joshua occurred right at the end of that calendar year.

2493: Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land (Joshua 4:19)

2493: The manna ceases (Joshua 5:11-12)

Exodus 16:35 says that the Israelites ate manna for 40 years. This would be from the second month of 2453 to the first month of 2493.¹⁰

The 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Numbers 14:33-34; Numbers 32:13; Deuteronomy 2:7; Deuteronomy 8:2; Deuteronomy 8:4; Deuteronomy 29:5; Joshua 5:6; Nehemiah 9:21; Psalm 95:10; Amos 2:10; Amos 5:25; Acts 7:36; Acts 7:42; Acts 13:18; Hebrews 3:9; Hebrews 3:17) would have lasted from the Exodus in the first month of 2453 to the crossing of the Jordan in the first month of 2493.

2493: Israel keeps their first Passover in the Promised Land (Joshua 5:10)

2414: Caleb is born (Joshua 14:7)

2499: Israel divides the Promised Land (Joshua 14:10)

Commentary

Point 1

If the descent of Jacob's household into Egypt occurred in 2238, 215 years after the call of Abram in 2023 and 215 years before the Exodus in 2453, then Israel spent exactly half of the 430 years in Canaan and half in Goshen.

Point 2

Concerning the Pharaohs during Israel's time in Egypt, it's entirely possible that there are none that go unmentioned in the narrative.

The angry impulsiveness of Joseph's Pharaoh (Genesis 40:2, 22) and his readiness to appoint Joseph as his right-hand man could imply that he was young, poorly counseled, and in need of a father figure, such that even though Joseph was only thirty at the time, he was still older than Pharaoh.

Joseph became governor in 2229. If his Pharaoh was 20 at the time, let's say he lived to be 110 like Joseph. That would put his death in 2319. Moses would have killed the Egyptian (Exodus 2:12) 41 years before the Exodus (Acts 7:23-24), which would be 2412. If the Pharaoh who "did not know Joseph" (Exodus 1:8) came directly after Joseph's Pharaoh and was also Moses' adoptive grandfather, that would put 93 years between the beginning of his solo reign and Moses' flight to Midian. If he was 20 years old when he became Pharaoh (which might explain his foolish decision to persecute the Hebrews who previously represented salvation for Egypt), and he died shortly after Moses fled, he could have died

¹⁰ Remember that years are not counted in the Bible according to 12-month periods, but rather the crossing of New Year lines.

around the age of 113, which was definitely a realistic lifespan during that period in Bible history.

The Exodus Pharaoh would have died in the Red Sea 41 years after Moses fled (or a little less), which if he began reigning in his 20s or 30s, is perfectly reasonable. Therefore, while not guaranteed, it's likely there were only three Pharaohs from Joseph's governorship to the Exodus.

Point 3

In Leviticus 25, we read that Israel was to keep a Sabbath year for the land every seven years, when they were to do no sowing or reaping of either field or vineyard. The land was divided in 2499, and thus 2500 would be the first full year of possession, which means 2506 would be the first Sabbath year in the Promised Land.

Interestingly, because the Israelites entered the Promised Land right at the beginning of 2493, Joshua's war of conquest lasted seven years, and the land was divided in the seventh year. This fits with the emphasis of the Book of Joshua on the division of the land coinciding with "rest" from war (Joshua 14:15), corresponding to a Sabbath rest. Even more interestingly, 2499 is divisible by 7, meaning this Sabbath rest and the beginning of the counting of years of possession and cycles of Sabbaths in the Promised Land were synced up with the counting of cycles of seven years from the creation of the world.

Leviticus 25 also indicates that the year after every seventh Sabbath year was to be a Jubilee, where sold land was to return to its original owner and everyone was to be freed from bondservant-hood and returned to his possession. I agree with James Jordan that the Jubilee was simply the first year of a new cycle of seven Sabbaths, not an extra 50th year.¹¹ The distance from seventh Sabbath to seventh Sabbath and from Jubilee to Jubilee would thus be 49 years, while each Jubilee would be 50 years after the previous cycle's seventh Sabbath.

The first 50 years of Leviticus 25:10 were counted starting from the Sabbath of the war of conquest, 2499. The first full cycle of seven Sabbaths followed by a Jubilee would thus have the seventh Sabbath in 2548 and the Jubilee in 2549.

Amazingly, 2499 is divisible by 49. Therefore, not only were the Sabbaths of Israel a mathematical continuation from creation, but so were the Jubilees! 2499 would be a seventh Sabbath and 2500, the first year of Israel's possession of the Land of Canaan,

¹¹ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1993/02/01/5_02/

would be a Jubilee. The Israelites thus began their possession and cultivation of the Land on a Jubilee and were supposed to return to their possessions on every subsequent Jubilee.

Point 4

Moses first stood before Pharaoh in 2452, shortly after the 50th Jubilee from creation (2451). It was that Jubilee which initiated the process of the Israelites returning to Canaan to take hold of their possession. Therefore, it's likely that the reason Moses' initial attempt to deliver the Israelites at the age of 40 (Acts 7:25) was unsuccessful was because God was waiting for the 50th Jubilee to set the Israelites free (which of course was bolstered by other considerations like Moses needing to mature as a leader and the Israelites needing to cry out for deliverance).

The Time of the Judges and the United Kingdom

Calculations

2499: Joshua dies

2499: The First Apostasy begins

Regarding the death of Joshua, the text is a little confusing, because Joshua 24:31 and Judges 2:7-10 seem to suggest that Joshua lived at least a short while after the division of the Land and that the whole nation of Israel was faithful for even longer after that. However, Judges 11:26 shows that this is impossible (to be explored shortly), that Joshua must have died immediately, and that the faithless next generation sinned while their fathers were still dying out.

The idea that the First Apostasy occurred while members of the faithful Conquest Generation were still alive fits a little better timing-wise with:

- Caleb's nephew Othniel being the first judge (as Caleb was part of the Exodus Generation, Othniel would have been part of the Conquest Generation).
- All the wickedness of Judges 17-21 happening during the lives of the Conquest Generation, as the Book of Judges jumps back in time after the death of Samson in Judges 16:
 - Judges 17 and 18 happened during the time the Danites were obtaining their possession (Judges 18:1).
 - Judges 19-21 happened around the same time as Judges 17 and 18 (Judges 19:1). Phinehas was high priest at this point (Judges 20:28).
- Joshua still being alive when Israel made the covenants with the Canaanites that angered God, stopped the conquest of the Land, and led to the First Apostasy (Judges 2:23).

Thematically, this makes sense in three ways:

- It represented a sin on a Sabbath (in this case, the Sabbath year of the week of Conquest years), much like the sin of Adam and Eve.
- Joshua 21:43-45 makes it clear that the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give Israel the Land of Canaan, was fulfilled in 2499. The First Apostasy thus fits the pattern of immediate failure after the establishment of a covenantal system, also as originally patterned by Adam and Eve.
- Even though the older Israelites may have been faithful through the lifetime of the elders of Joshua's day, the nation as a whole had a tendency towards wickedness during Joshua's lifetime (as evidenced by the covenants with the Canaanites) and

fell immediately upon Joshua's death, which is the exact pattern of the time of the judges (Judges 2:19).

Note: the NKJV rendering of Joshua 23:1 must be incorrect, as it suggests that Joshua gave his farewell address a long time after the division of the Land. The NIV would more accurately suggest that he gave his farewell address "after a long time had passed and the Lord had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them" (meaning after the seven years of conquest and the division of the Land).

2389: Joshua is born (Joshua 24:29)

2507: Othniel becomes judge (Judges 3:8-9)

2547: Othniel dies (Judges 3:11-12)

2547: The Second Apostasy begins

2565: Ehud becomes judge (Judges 3:14-15)

2645: Ehud dies (Judges 3:30)

2645: The Third Apostasy begins (Judges 4:1)

2665: Barak and Deborah deliver Israel (Judges 4:3)

2705: The Fourth Apostasy begins (Judges 5:31)

2712: Gideon becomes judge (Judges 6:1)

2752: Gideon dies (Judges 8:28)

2752: The Fifth Apostasy begins (Judges 8:33)

2752: Abimelech makes himself king

2755: Abimelech dies (Judges 9:22)

2755: Tola becomes judge (Judges 10:1)

2778: Tola dies (Judges 10:2)

2778: Jair becomes judge (Judges 10:3)

2800: Jair dies (Judges 10:3-5)

2800: The Sixth Apostasy begins (Judges 10:6)

2818: Jephthah becomes judge and defeats the Ammonites (Judges 10:8)

In Judges 11, after Jephthah gains control of Israel's army, he engages in a dialogue with the Ammonites who have invaded Israel. The Ammonite king claims he has come to reclaim land stolen by Israel during their time in the wilderness. Jephthah counters that Israel only took the land of the Amorites. He also asks, "While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its villages, in Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover them within that time?" (Judges 11:26)

The only way this "300 years" can make sense with the chronological data in the Torah, Joshua, and the first half of Judges is if:

- Jephthah is starting that 300 years with the return of the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half of the tribe of Manasseh to the land of the Amorites in Joshua 22 (when their "dwelling" in that land truly began), which happened in 2499 after the land was divided.
- Jephthah is ending the 300 years in 2799, the year before the Sixth Apostasy began and the Ammonites invaded (Judges 10:7).

Therefore, in Jephthah's estimation, the Ammonites did nothing from 2499-2799, then first invaded Israel in 2800 on the pretense of reclaiming their stolen land and had been attempting to reclaim that land for 18 years at the time Jephthah became judge.

Because there is no reasonable way to take any of the time periods in Judges up to this point and make them overlap, nor can the beginning of Israel's dwelling in the land of the Amorites have begun later than 2499, this confirms that Joshua's death and the First Apostasy must have begun the same year the land was divided.

2824: Jephthah dies (Judges 12:7)

2824: Ibzan becomes judge (Judges 12:8)

2831: Ibzan dies (Judges 12:9-10)

2831: Elon becomes judge (Judges 12:11)

2841: Elon dies (Judges 12:11-12)

2841: Abdon becomes judge (Judges 12:13)

2849: Abdon dies (Judges 12:14-15)

2849: The Seventh Apostasy begins (Judges 13:1)

The Kingdom Begins

2798: Eli dies

2798: The ark is captured by the Philistines

2818: Samuel defeats the Philistines and becomes judge

2849: The second Philistine oppression begins

2849: Saul is anointed as king

2859: David is born

The Seventh Apostasy began in 2849. However, working backwards from 1 Kings 6:1 and looking at the timeline of the early kings of Israel, we can also see that this was the year Saul became king. The math would go as such:

The fourth year of Solomon's reign was the 480th year from the Exodus (1 Kings 6:1) and therefore would be 2933. Note: Based on the lack of any clarifying data about a one-year co-reign between David and Solomon (as well as the numerological implications of assuming there was no co-reign), I must conclude that 1 Kings 6:1 is meant to be interpreted differently than Numbers 1:1 (this is apparently a LOLI). The former verse indicates that the First Temple was begun 480 years after the Exodus, i.e., 2933, while the latter verse indicates that the first census of Israel occurred in the second year after the Exodus, with 2453 being the first year.

This means Solomon became king in 2929. Now, according to 2 Samuel 5:4 and 1 Kings 2:11, David reigned for 40 years. Therefore, he would have become king in 2889. Saul reigned for 40 years (Acts 13:21), which means he would have become king in 2849.

This presents an interesting framework for interpreting the flow of Israelite history. A basic reading of the Bible in canon order suggests that Samuel was after Samson, that Samuel was the last judge (besides the brief tenure of his corrupt sons), and that the judges were replaced with the kings. This would also be the most obvious reading of Acts 13:16-22, which seems to suggest that there were 450 years of judges before Samuel, who was followed first by Saul and then by David.

However, this does not jive with the chronological information presented in the Bible. Instead, an alternative narrative emerges: Eli the judge was a contemporary of Tola and Jair. When he died, the ark of God was briefly in Philistia before returning to Israel and beginning a 20-year sojourn in Kirjath Jearim (1 Samuel 7:2). At the end of the 20 years, Israel was said to be experiencing oppression by the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:3), which Samuel put to an end (1 Samuel 7:13). This would be the end of the Sixth Apostasy.

Note that during the Sixth Apostasy, Israel was afflicted by both the Ammonites and the Philistines (Judges 10:7). However, the Book of Judges only relates the defeat of the

Ammonites by Jephthah. Therefore, Samuel's defeat of the Philistines must have been at the same time, so that Jephthah and Samuel became judges at the same time, and Israel experienced peace during most of Samuel's tenure (not apostatizing until Abdon died and Samuel's sons started judging corruptly).

The explanation for this dual judgeship comes from the geography of Israel.¹² The Ammonites were closer to the northern tribes, and Jephthah was from Gilead in the North. The Philistines were closer to the southern territory that would later become the kingdom of Judah. The locations from which Samuel judged Israel that are mentioned in 1 Samuel 7:15-17 are all in the South. Thus, Samuel judged in the South, while Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon primarily judged in the North.

Note that the second Philistine oppression started with the Seventh Apostasy in 2849, the year Saul became king. 1 Samuel 9:16 indicates that the Philistines were already oppressing Israel when Saul was anointed. Furthermore, 1 Samuel 14:52 indicates that there was war with the Philistines all the days of Saul, and it was the Philistines who killed Saul (1 Samuel 31). This all supports the idea that the 40 years of Saul mentioned in Acts 13 coincided with the 40 years of the Philistines mentioned in Judges 13:1.

This is also supported by the genealogy of David. According to Matthew 1, Ruth 4, Luke 3, and 1 Chronicles 2, Nahshon begot Salmon, who begot Boaz, who begot Obed, who begot Jesse, who begot David. Nahshon was a member of the Exodus Generation, the head of the house of Judah (Numbers 1:7). Salmon was a member of the Conquest Generation and married Rahab (Matthew 1:5).

That puts the conception of Salmon no later than 2492 (as Nahshon did not enter the Promised Land) and the conception of Boaz no earlier than the conquest of Jericho in 2493. If the judges lasted for 450 years starting in 2499 (what I call the "long chronology" option for Judges), then the earliest Saul could have become king would be 2949, in which case David would have become king in 2989 at the age of thirty (2 Samuel 5:4). David would therefore have been born in 2959.

To evaluate the long chronology option, let's assume that Salmon was born in 2493 and married Rahab after he came of age. There would be no less than 466 years between the births of Salmon and David. Therefore, the average lifespan of each of David's ancestors starting with Salmon would be approximately $466 / 4 = 116$. On average, that means Salmon would be 116 when he begot Boaz, Boaz would be 116 when he begot Obed, Obed would be 116 when he begot Jesse, and Jesse would be 116 when he begot David.

¹² I had read a mention by Jordan somewhere that there could be dual judgeships in Israel based on geography, so partial credit for this approach goes to him.

There are three issues with this timeline:

- Each man would have died 5 or at most 10 years after the birth of their son, which, while technically possible (except for Jesse), doesn't seem likely.
- Jesse would have been at least 130, if not 140, when David killed Goliath, and we know from 1 Samuel 17:17 that Jesse was still alive at that time. By this point in human history, living past 120 was either extremely rare or never occurred at all.
- Rahab was already a prostitute at the time of the destruction of Jericho and therefore must have (hopefully!) been at least 16. So, in this timeline, she would be at least 16 years older than her eventual husband Salmon. That means she would have birthed Boaz at the age of at least 132, which would be a miracle that would put the conception of Isaac to shame.

If, however, the short chronology option is correct, there is a range of when Salmon could have been born, from 2435 (19 years before 2454, when Israelites 20 years and above were forbidden to enter the Promised Land) to 2493 (if Nahshon conceived him just before dying in 2492). David would be born in 2859 (thirty years before 2889). That means there was a range of between 366 and 424 years between the birth of Salmon and the birth of David.

At the short end of the spectrum, averaging out the lifespans of each generation between the two men would result in each man fathering his son at about the age of 92. At the long end, it would be 106.

Let's aim for a middle ground and assume Salmon was 30 when he entered the Promised Land (as a working prostitute, Rahab was at least in her late teenage years and probably not a middle-aged woman yet, so this would make them close in age when they married). If he were born in 2463, that would put 396 years between his birth and David's, which would average 99 years for the age of each man at the time of his son's birth. That would put Boaz's birth around 2562, Obed's around 2661, Jesse's around 2760, and David's in 2859.

While requiring the men to be old when they fathered the next generation, it isn't impossible, especially given that Jacob was 91 when he fathered Joseph. It would explain Boaz calling Ruth "my daughter" and indicating she would have naturally been inclined to pursue men younger than him (Ruth 3:10). It would also jive with Jesse being "advanced in years" when David was anointed (1 Samuel 17:12).

As we have discussed, Judges 17 jumps back in time to the First Apostasy, and the rest of the book stays in that time period. Ruth must take place after Judges 21, as Boaz is an older man in that book. If my conjecture that Obed would have been born around 2661 is correct, then the famine of Ruth 1 was probably due to the Third Apostasy, which started in 2645 and ended in 2665. The famine might have started when the apostasy started, and since the famine was ten years long (Ruth 1:4), that would put Obed's conception in 2655 and

birth in 2656. Or the famine might have started halfway through the Third Apostasy and ended when Barak and Deborah defeated Sisera and the land began 40 years of rest in 2665. Thus, Obed might have been conceived in 2665 and born in 2666. Either way is very close to the approximation I've calculated.

All of this means the Bible jumps from the death of Samson in Judges 16 back in Judges 17 to just after the division of the land in order to explore the problems with there being no king yet (Judges 18:1; Judges 19:1; Judges 21:25). It then continues through the end of Judges, Ruth and 1 Samuel in order to provide a narrative of a different set of events happening in parallel to Judges 1-16, so as to give background context to David becoming king.

2700: Eli is born (1 Samuel 4:15)

2758: Eli becomes judge (1 Samuel 4:18)

2849: Saul is proclaimed king

2850: Saul is coronated

1 Samuel 13:1 indicates that Saul was “a son of one year” when he became king. According to James Jordan, Saul’s “sonship” began with his anointing in 1 Samuel 10 (Samuel became his spiritual father at that time¹³). If, however, the entirety of Saul’s rule was contained within the 40 years of the Philistines, then the language implies that Saul was both anointed and proclaimed king in 2849. The confrontation with Nahash the Ammonite would have occurred in 2850, after which the kingdom was “renewed” at his coronation (1 Samuel 11:14), one year after Saul’s anointing. The accounting of his reign in 1 Samuel 13 is thus a little unique, but this is understandable for the first anointed king.

2851: Saul offers the unlawful sacrifice

The question then arises: were the two years Saul reigned (1 Samuel 13:1)¹⁴ counted from his initial proclamation or his coronation? I would suggest his proclamation, because that would connect with Israel’s 40 years in the wilderness. Saul has much in common with the Exodus Generation: initially faithful, initially triumphant, but after two years, their failure to love God with their whole hearts led to their ultimate destruction and replacement with a more faithful man/generation 38 years later. Saul’s offering of the unlawful sacrifice in 1 Samuel 13:7-14 was the moment Saul broke God’s commandment and became destined to lose his kingdom to David.

2849: Samson is born

¹³ http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-chronology/3_07/

¹⁴ Ibid.

2869: Samson starts judging Israel

2889: Saul and Jonathan die

2889: Samson ends the Philistine oppression with his death

Returning to Judges 13, we see that Samson was born after the 40 years of the Philistine oppression had begun (13:5). Samson judged Israel for 20 years (Judges 15:20; 16:31).

Looking at the beginning of 2 Samuel, we note that in the passages dealing with David being anointed as king of Judah and entering into a civil war with Saul's house, there is no conflict with the Philistines mentioned. Samson must have therefore died and taken the 3000 Philistines with him (many of whom were leaders and nobles – Judges 16:27) almost immediately after Saul's death. This would have shattered the might of the Philistines so much that they stopped oppressing Israel while they recovered and didn't interfere with the "long war" between David and Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 3:1).

Samson therefore became a judge in 2869 (which means he began judging just as he was becoming old enough to marry, which fits his narrative). He was therefore judging Israel at the time David was anointed.

The Philistines did apparently recover to the point where they made an attempt to stop David from consolidating power in 2 Samuel 5:17-25, but they failed and were ultimately completely subdued (2 Samuel 8:1).

2889: David becomes king of Judah in Hebron

2889: Ishbosheth becomes king of Israel

2891: Ishbosheth dies

2891: David conquers Jerusalem

2896: David officially moves to Jerusalem

Ishbosheth ruled Israel for two years (2 Samuel 2:8-10), but David was in Hebron "over the house of Judah" for 7.5 years before moving to Jerusalem, where he spent the final 33 of his 40 years as king (2 Samuel 2:11; 2 Samuel 5:5; 1 Chronicles 3:4). There are two possible explanations for this discrepancy:

- Ishbosheth began ruling immediately after Saul's death in the North, and these verses are intended to mean "David began ruling in Hebron over just the tribe of Judah and ruled for two years, then continued ruling over not just Judah but all Israel for the remainder of his time in Hebron, for a sum total of 7.5 years."

- It took Abner five years to consolidate power under Ishbosheth, and David moved to Jerusalem immediately after becoming king of all Israel.

I find the first option much more plausible for two reasons:

- The northern tribes had been under Saul's rule for 40 years. Why would it take five years to align them under Saul's son Ishbosheth, the natural inheritor of Saul's kingdom with Jonathan being dead?
- Given that David ruled for 40 years, this fits the same pattern of 2 years / 38 years we saw with the Exodus Generation and with Saul.

David would also have needed a commander for his army as soon as he became king of both Israel and Judah (especially with Abner dead), so it is logical that he would have selected one in 2891 by challenging his men to be the first to attack the Jebusites of Jerusalem, the city he wished to dwell in (1 Chronicles 11:6). 1 Chronicles 11:8 describes the repairs and improvements David and Joab made to Jerusalem after they conquered it, which would explain the five-year waiting period before David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. David dwelt in the stronghold during that time (1 Chronicles 11:7), but it wasn't until Hiram of Tyre built him his cedar house (1 Chronicles 14:1) and the city was completely repaired and fortified that David officially moved and the 7.5 years in Hebron ended.

As mentioned previously, the 7.5 years could also be thought of as "7 years," because David crossed the New Year line seven times in Hebron, which explains 1 Kings 2:11 and 1 Chronicles 29:27.

2849: Ishbosheth is born (2 Samuel 2:10)

2884: Mephibosheth is born (2 Samuel 4:4)

2929: Solomon becomes co-regent with David in Judah

2929: David dies (2 Samuel 5:4; 2 Samuel 5:5; 1 Kings 2:11; 1 Chronicles 3:4; 1 Chronicles 29:27)

2929: Solomon becomes sole king of Judah

In 1 Kings 1, David establishes a co-reign with Solomon to stave off Adonijah's attempt to seize the kingdom for himself. Moreover, in David's last instructions to Solomon, he mentions Solomon's "wisdom" (1 Kings 2:6), potentially implying that 1 Kings 3, which describes how Solomon obtained his great wisdom, was chronologically before 1 Kings 2 and was only placed after it to shift the text to a narrative focused more on Solomon than David.

David gave his final instructions to Solomon and Israel, arranged for Solomon to be made king “the second time” (1 Chronicles 29:22), then died. All of this happened in 2929.

2933: The foundation of the First Temple is laid (1 Kings 6:1; 1 Kings 6:37; 2 Chronicles 3:2)

2940: The First Temple is completed (1 Kings 6:38)

2953: Solomon completes the King’s Palace (1 Kings 7:1; 1 Kings 9:10; 2 Chronicles 8:1)

2953: Solomon dedicates the Temple

We know the Temple wasn’t dedicated until after the palace was complete for three reasons:

- The Temple was completed in the eighth month (1 Kings 6:38), but the feast that occurred after the dedication ended in the seventh month (2 Chronicles 7:10), so that must have been the seventh month of 2953.
- After the dedication, 2 Chronicles 7:11 says, "Thus Solomon finished the house of the Lord and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the Lord and in his own house."
- 1 Kings 9:1 says that God's second appearance to Solomon occurred after the palace was complete. It seems unlikely that God waited 13 years after Temple worship began to notify Solomon that He had heard Solomon's prayer.

We also can finally see an explanation here for Acts 13:16-22. In that passage, Paul says that the time of the judges started after the division of the Land and lasted about 450 years (as we previously established, that cannot be the length of time between the division of the Land and Samuel anointing Saul). The dedication of the Temple in 2953 would have been 454 years after the division of the Land in 2499 and is almost certainly what Paul was referring to when he said “about 450 years.” Paul would therefore be including the details of Saul and David in those 450 years (the “afterward” of Acts 13:21 would be after Samuel, not after the 450 years).

The logic of ending the time of the judges with the dedication of the Temple comes from 2 Samuel 7:10-11: “Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies.” The building and dedication of the Temple and the reign of Solomon were therefore associated with the end of the oppressions that gave rise to judges.

2969: Solomon dies (1 Kings 11:42; 2 Chronicles 9:30)

Commentary

Saul became king on the 50th Sabbath in the Promised Land ((2849 – 2499) / 7). The establishment of the first king on a Sabbath year signals that it represented rest from the problems associated with everyone in Israel doing what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25).

The Divided Kingdom from Rehoboam and Jeroboam to Jehu

Note: There are several instances where Northern and Southern kings have similar or identical names. Therefore, I will distinguish them as such: “Ahaziah (I)” for Ahaziah of Israel and “Ahaziah (J)” for Ahaziah of Judah. I will also choose only one name to use for each king that has aliases.

Interpretative Key 4: Jeroboam Set the Northern Calendar Year to Start in the Eighth Month¹⁵

2969E: Rehoboam becomes king of Judah

2969E: Jeroboam become king of Israel

God established (or reconfirmed) the Israelite calendar at the time of the Exodus (Exodus 12:1). The month “Abib” became the first month, and Passover was celebrated in the middle of that month. Up until the days of Jeroboam, all Israel observed that calendar. Once he started ruling Northern Israel, however, Jeroboam set up an alternate feast to Passover in the eighth month (1 Kings 12:32). 1 Kings 12:33 says he “devised this month in his own heart,” implying that he was not just establishing a different feast but also setting the eighth month to be the first month of the calendar of Northern Israel, in the hopes of divorcing his nation from the true system of worship as much as possible.

The years in the books of 1 and 2 Kings make sense when you realize that the reigns of the Northern kings from Jeroboam through Jehu are counted according to Jeroboam’s system, while the Southern kings are counted according to God’s original designated calendar.

Based on the years given for the first few kings after Solomon (in other words, without creating either an unexplained gap or an undefined co-reign between Rehoboam and Abijam), Rehoboam and Jeroboam apparently both began reigning before the eighth month of 2969, and Jeroboam set up the new calendar later that year.

Thus, Jeroboam became king in “early 2969,” and his next year, his “first year,” began in late 2969 and went through early 2970. I will call the first seven months of a year the “early” part of that year (which I will format as “XXXXE”) and the last five months the “late” part of that year (which I will format as “XXXXL”). Note: I’m sure Jeroboam enjoyed the fact that even

¹⁵ Credit: me.

though Rehoboam began reigning first, Jeroboam reached each numbered year of his reign five months before Rehoboam did.

Also note: Because the Southern calendar is paramount, God provides enough data to identify the Southern year in which every event occurs. For Northern events, that means we will know both the Southern year and which segment of the year (early or late) they occurred in.

Interpretative Key 5: Lengths of Reigns Do Not Consistently Start or End with Either a Co-Reign or a Full Reign¹⁶

When we read statements like “X was Y years old when he became king and reigned for Z years” or “X became king in the Yth year of Z king of Judah/Israel”:

- The beginning of the king’s rule could be referring to either the beginning of his co-reign with his father or the year he became sole king after the death of his father.
- The end of the king’s rule could be referring to either the beginning of his co-reign with his son or the year of his death.
- Co-reigns are rarely made explicit. Often, they are discovered only by working through the data methodically.
- If there is a co-reign, enough data is given to map out the beginning and end of the co-reign and the beginning and end of the solo reign. There is never a time when it is unclear whether there was a co-reign or not.

The lengths of the reigns of the kings are therefore a puzzle that has to be carefully teased out.

Interpretative Key 6: For Judean Kings Who Were Co-Regents with Their Fathers, Their Listed Ages Refer to the Beginnings of Their Co-Reigns¹⁷

Having gone through all the co-reigns of the kings of Judah, I have never found a time when a Judean king put his son on the throne as co-regent before his son was 20 (this is the Biblical age of adulthood, as seen in Numbers 14:29-31). Any time a king of Judah was put on the throne before the age of 20, it always appears to be because his father died before his eldest son turned 20 (the kings of Israel do not have their ages listed in the Bible, so we can’t know how they handled this issue).

¹⁶ Credit: me.

¹⁷ Credit: me.

As we will see, there are two times we can be reasonably confident that the age of a Judean king at the time of his “beginning to reign” is tied to the beginning of his co-reign with his father, not his age when his father died (or was deposed):

- The “42 years” of 2 Chronicles 22:2 runs up to the beginning of Ahaziah’s co-reign with Jehoram.
- Ahaz became king at the age of 20. If I am correct that Judean kings did not make their sons co-regents until they were legal adults, this must be a reference to Ahaz’s age when he began a co-reign with Jotham, not when he became sole king (else he would have been a minor when he became co-regent).

As I don’t believe the many references to the ages of Judean kings at the beginning of their reigns would be included if they couldn’t be tied to a specific year in the Bible timeline, without any evidence going against this framework, I am concluding that the age of Judean kings at the time they began to reign refers to their age at the beginning of a co-reign, if they had one.

Calculations

2928: Rehoboam is born (1 Kings 14:21; 2 Chronicles 12:13)

2974: Shishak invades Judah (1 Kings 14:25; 2 Chronicles 12:2)

2986L: Rehoboam dies

2986L: Abijam becomes king of Judah

2989E: Asa becomes co-regent with Abijam in Judah

2991E: Jeroboam dies

2991E: Nadab becomes king of Israel

2992L: Baasha murders Nadab

2992L: Baasha becomes king of Israel

2994: Abijam dies

2994: Asa becomes sole king of Judah

2994: Asa begins cleansing Judah

2994: Judah experiences rest from war

3004: Asa defeats Zerah the Ethiopian

3004: Asa renews the covenant in Judah

3005: Baasha invades Judah

3015E: Elah becomes co-regent with Baasha in Israel

3016L: Baasha dies

3016L: Elah becomes sole king of Israel

3016L: Zimri murders Elah

3016L: Zimri becomes king of Israel

3016L: Omri defeats Zimri

3016L: Zimri dies

3016L: Omri becomes king of Israel

Jeroboam reigned for 22 years (1 Kings 14:20). Therefore, he stopped reigning (either because he set up a co-reign with his son or because he died) in either late 2990 or early 2991.

Rehoboam reigned for 17 years (1 Kings 14:21; 2 Chronicles 12:13). Because there is no evidence of a co-reign between Rehoboam and Solomon, that means he stopped reigning in 2986.

Abijam began reigning in Judah in the 18th year of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:1; 2 Chronicles 13:1), which would be either late 2986 or early 2987.

Abijam reigned for three years (1 Kings 15:2; 2 Chronicles 13:2). Looking at the data about his son Asa, we can see that after Abijam's death, Asa did some initial cleansing of the idolatry in Judah that led to ten years of quiet (2 Chronicles 14:1). At the end of ten years, Zerah the Ethiopian came up against Judah, but Asa cried out to God for help, so God delivered him and Judah. Then God sent Azariah the prophet to encourage Asa to complete the cleansing of Judah that he had been too scared to complete previously (Zerah's invasion was apparently meant to be a wake-up call for Asa about the consequences of not completing his covenant renewal). Therefore, Asa took courage, finished the good work he had started previously, and renewed the covenant.

Note that there is a seeming discrepancy between 1 Kings 16:11-15, which says that Zimri wiped out Baasha's lineage in the 27th year of Asa, and 2 Chronicles 16:1, which says that Baasha invaded Judah in the 36th year of Asa. Looking at all the data for Abijam, Asa, and the Israelite kings through Omri, this cannot be due to an extremely long co-reign between Asa and Abijam. As it turns out, 2 Chronicles 15:19 and 2 Chronicles 16:1 are critical pieces of data for mapping out the timeline of Abijam and Asa. Therefore, I agree with

Jordan's suggestion¹⁸ that the 35 years and 36 years are dated from the splitting of the kingdom in 2969 (when Southern Judah became its own independent entity).¹⁹

The full covenant renewal occurred in Asa's 15th year (2 Chronicles 15:10). If the 35 years of 2 Chronicles 15:19 are indeed dated from the splitting of the kingdom, then the covenant renewal of Asa occurred in 3004, while the conflict with Baasha and Asa's failure to respond faithfully occurred the following year in 3005 (the 36th year from the splitting of the kingdom – 2 Chronicles 16:1). As Jordan points out, this follows the typical pattern of man's failure immediately after the establishment or renewal of a covenant.

This also means the ten years of quiet ended in Asa's fifteenth year, which means there was a five-year co-reign between Asa and Abijam. But Asa became king in the 20th year of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:9), which would be either late 2988 or early 2989. That must therefore be the start of the 15 years of Asa that ended in 3004, so Asa began reigning in early 2989.

Therefore, Abijam died in 2994. Given that there is no evidence of a co-reign between Rehoboam and Abijam, the only option for the three years of his reign must be from late 2986 to early 2989 (which would be two years in Northern time but three years in Southern time). Therefore, Rehoboam died and Abijam became king in late 2986.

Nadab became king of Israel in Asa's second year (1 Kings 15:10). There is no evidence of a co-reign between Jeroboam and Nadab, which means Jeroboam died in early 2991. Because Nadab reigned two years (1 Kings 15:25) and then was murdered by Baasha in Asa's third year (1 Kings 15:28; 1 Kings 15:33), Nadab must have died and been replaced by Baasha in late 2992 (which would be two years in Northern time but one year in Southern time).

Baasha reigned for 24 years (1 Kings 15:33), which means he stopped reigning in either late 3016 or early 3017. His son Elah began reigning in Asa's 26th year (1 Kings 16:8), which could be dated from either 2989 or 2994, which would be either 3015 or 3020. If, however, Elah's start was dated from 2994, we would have no further information about either the end of Baasha's solo reign or the end of his full reign, which means the author is implying that Elah began a co-reign with his father in 3015.

Elah reigned two years (1 Kings 16:8) and then was murdered by Zimri in Asa's 27th year (1 Kings 16:10). As Asa's 27th year was 3016, the only way this could work is if Elah became king in early 3015 and was murdered and replaced by Zimri in late 3016. As Elah reigned in

¹⁸ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1991/11/01/3_11/

¹⁹ The other possibility Jordan offers, although he disagrees with it, is that these verses are scribal errors. Ascribing difficult verses to scribal errors is a nuclear option that I never found the need to use in building the timeline in this document, which is good, because it is ripe for "slippery slope" problems.

Baasha's place after Baasha's death (1 Kings 16:6), Baasha must have died in late 3016, shortly before Elah was murdered. This makes sense if Elah was a drunkard of a far weaker political constitution than his father (1 Kings 16:9), and after Baasha's death Zimri immediately saw his opportunity to take over.

According to 1 Kings 16:15, Zimri's entire seven-day reign took place in late 3016, at which point he was replaced by Omri.

3000: Jehoshaphat is born (1 Kings 22:42; 2 Chronicles 20:31)

3020E: Omri wins his civil war with Tibni

3032E: Omri dies

3032E: Ahab becomes king of Israel

3033: Asa becomes diseased in his feet (2 Chronicles 16:12)

3035L: Asa dies

3035L: Jehoshaphat becomes king of Judah

3038: Jehoshaphat sends teachers of the Law throughout Judah (2 Chronicles 17:7)

3052E: Ahaziah (I) becomes co-regent with Ahab in Israel

3053L: Ahab dies

3053L: Ahaziah (I) dies

3053L: Jehoram (I) becomes king of Israel

At this point, we have three tasks we must accomplish as we proceed through the remainder of the pre-Jehu timeline:

- We have to map out the start and end of Omri's reign.
- We have to determine the Southern year the capital of Israel moved from Tirzah to Samaria.
- We have to account for 2 Chronicles 22:2. According to 2 Kings 8:26, Ahaziah (J) was 22 when he began ruling. However, 2 Chronicles 22:2 says he was 42. As it turns out, per Jordan's suggestion, this is a similar case to the 35 and 36 years of Asa,²⁰ but my exact interpretation is slightly different than his.

The key to achieving these objectives (and after extensive analysis and experimentation, I don't believe there's any other way to do so) is to interpret Omri winning the civil war with

²⁰ Ibid.

Tibni as happening in the 31st year of Asa (1 Kings 16:23) as dated from the beginning of Asa's co-reign with Abijam in 2989, which would be 3020, but the beginning of Ahab's reign as happening in the 38th year of Asa (1 Kings 16:29) as dated from Abijam's death and the beginning of Asa's solo reign in 2994, which would be 3032. The 12 years of Omri (1 Kings 16:23) therefore ran from either early 3020 to early 3032 or late 3020 to late 3032.

This means there is no evidence of a co-reign between Omri and Ahab. There is also no evidence of a co-reign between Jehoshaphat and Asa, which means that Asa's death in his 41st year (2 Chronicles 16:13) must have happened in 3035, at which time Jehoshaphat became king. However, Jehoshaphat became king in Ahab's fourth year (1 Kings 22:41), which means Ahab became king in early 3032, and Jehoshaphat became king in late 3035. This means Omri became king in early 3020 and died in early 3032.

Ahaziah (I) began ruling in the 17th year of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:51), which would be 3052. He reigned for two years (1 Kings 22:51) and then died and was replaced by Jehoram (I) in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat (2 Kings 3:1), which would be 3053. This means Ahaziah (I) began ruling in early 3052 and died in late 3053.

Ahab reigned for 22 years (1 Kings 16:29), which means he died in either late 3053 or early 3054. However, because the kingdom went from Ahaziah (I) to Jehoram (I) after Ahaziah's death instead of reverting to Ahab (2 Kings 1:17), we know Ahab had to have died before Ahaziah did. This means Ahaziah began a co-reign with Ahab in early 3052, Ahab died in late 3053, and Ahaziah died shortly afterwards in late 3053 as well.

3051E: Jehoram becomes co-regent temporarily with Jehoshaphat in Judah

Jehoram (I) began reigning in the second year of Jehoram (J) (2 Kings 1:17), which means Jehoram (J) began reigning in 3051. Jehoshaphat reigned for 25 years (1 Kings 22:42; 2 Chronicles 20:31), which means he stopped reigning in 3060. Jehoram also started reigning in the fifth year of Jehoram (I) (2 Kings 8:16), which would be late 3058 or early 3059. This provides three starting points for Jehoram (J): 3051, 3058L/3059E, and 3060.

I will adopt Jordan's approach of assuming Jehoram (J) began a temporary co-reign in 3051 that was stopped and was later restarted in the fifth year of Jehoram (I),²¹ although I don't follow his proposed solution completely. 2 Kings 8:16 explicitly calls out that Jehoshaphat was king at the time the second co-reign began, which is evidence for the double co-reign idea. Furthermore, the age and reign of Jehoram (J) are repeated in 2 Chronicles 21:5 and 2 Chronicles 21:20, which is a sign from the author that something unusual is happening and we need to pay careful attention (something similar happens later with Jotham).

²¹ https://biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-chronology/4_04/

To understand the double co-reign, let's consider the timeline of the last few years of Ahab's life. Ahab died after three years without war between Israel and Syria (1 Kings 22:1), in the "third year" (1 Kings 22:2). This means the start of the peace, which happened in the spring (1 Kings 20:26), must have happened in early 3050, as Ahab died in late 3053.

In the later part of 3049, God had warned Ahab via a prophet (1 Kings 20:22) that Syria would attack the following spring. I would posit that after the conflict between Syria and Israel in the spring of 3050, Jehoshaphat, seeing that God was helping Israel and wanting to join forces with them against the Syrians, allied himself with Ahab, taking Ahab's daughter Athaliah as a wife for Jehoram (J) (2 Chronicles 18:1) and placing Jehoram (J) on the throne as co-regent in 3051.

Most likely Ahab set his son Ahaziah (I) on the throne after the incident with Naboth. Thus, both kings had co-regents in place at the time they went out to battle with Syria in 1 Kings 22.

At some point after the death of Ahaziah (I), Jehoshaphat removed Jehoram (J) from the throne. Jordan has suggested that that may have been due to wickedness on the part of Jehoram (J),²² which should have been a sign to Jehoshaphat that he sinned in allying himself with Ahab and that he should have forced a divorce between Jehoram (J) and Athaliah. His failure to do so, along with his alliance with Jehoram (I) (2 Kings 3:6-7), had disastrous consequences later.

3023E: Omri moves the capital of Northern Israel to Samaria

3026: Jehoram (J) is born (2 Kings 8:17; 2 Chronicles 21:5; 2 Chronicles 21:20)

3043: Ahaziah (J) is born (2 Kings 8:26)

3058L: Jehoram (J) becomes co-regent with Jehoshaphat in Judah again

3060: Jehoshaphat dies

3060: Jehoram (J) becomes sole king of Judah

3064: Jehoram (J) develops an incurable intestinal disease (2 Chronicles 21:19)

3065E: Ahaziah (J) becomes co-regent with Jehoram (J) in Judah

3066E: Jehoram (J) dies

3066E: Ahaziah (J) becomes sole king of Judah

²² Ibid.

3066E: Jehu kills Jehoram (I) and Ahaziah (J)

Given the temporary nature of Jehoram's first co-reign, we know Jehoram (J) became permanent co-regent in late 3058 or early 3059, and Jehoshaphat died in 3060. Jehoram (I) reigned for 12 years (2 Kings 3:1), which means he died in late 3065 or early 3066. Ahaziah (J) began reigning in both the 11th (2 Kings 9:29) and 12th (2 Kings 8:25) years of Jehoram (I), and he reigned for one year (2 Kings 8:26).

Jehoram (J) reigned for eight years (2 Kings 8:17; 2 Chronicles 21:5; 2 Chronicles 21:20), which could be timed from either late 3058, early 3059, or sometime in 3060. However, the second beginning of the reign of Ahaziah (J) in the 12th year of Jehoram (I) must have happened when Jehoram (J) died, which means Jehoram (J) must have died in late 3065 or early 3066. Therefore, the only option that works is for Jehoram (J) to have begun a co-reign with Jehoshaphat in late 3058 and died in early 3066.

Ahaziah (J) became co-regent in the 11th year of Jehoram (I), which would be late 3064 or early 3065. But he reigned for one year (according to the Southern calendar) before dying, so he became co-regent with Jehoram (J) in early 3065 (probably when his father's intestinal disease progressed to the point where he could no longer rule effectively) and reigned for one year (both Southern and Northern) from the beginning of his co-regency to his death in early 3066, on the same day Jehoram (I) died.

We can now examine the 42 years of 2 Chronicles 22:2. Something significant must have happened 42 years before either early 3065 or early 3066. It cannot be traced back to either start of Omri's reign in late 3016 or early 3020,²³ but we know from 1 Kings 16:23 that Omri reigned for six years in Tirzah before moving the capital of Israel to Samaria. If those six years began in late 3106 and ended in early 3023, then the move to Samaria was exactly 42 years before Ahaziah (J) began his co-reign with Jehoram (J) in early 3065 (this would be 42 years according to both the Northern and the Southern calendar, which is fitting, as this number connects a Southern king to his Northern political influence).

Thus, the author of 2 Chronicles is indicating that, just as with Asa's reign being dated back to the kingdom split, the move to Samaria represented a new beginning for the Northern kingdom. Hence, the evil of Jehoram (J) and Ahaziah (J) had the wickedness of this new kingdom at its root. It's also possible that Omri arranged for Ahab's marriage to Jezebel at the time he moved to Samaria, which would fit thematically, but I have not uncovered additional Bible evidence for that idea.

²³ Jordan's suggestion was that the 42 years traced back to Omri becoming king.

Note: Further evidence for this interpretation is the fact that 2 Chronicles 22:2 is the only piece of chronological data that can provide the exact Southern year the capital of Israel was moved to Samaria, an event that is clearly meant to be tied into the timeline.

The Divided Kingdom from Jehu to the Assyrian Exile

Interpretative Key 7: Jehu Restored the Southern Calendar in Northern Israel²⁴

3066: Jehu becomes king of Israel

2 Kings explicitly omits the typical connector between the two kingdoms that would say that Jehu became king of Israel in the first year of Ahaziah king of Judah. This is no doubt in part because of the highly unusual situation of one man killing both the Northern and Southern kings at the same time, but more importantly, Jehu apparently re-established the legitimate Israelite calendar in the Northern kingdom upon assuming the throne (part of his “zeal for the LORD,” per 2 Kings 10:16). This is the only obvious explanation for the shift at this point in how the years are accounted, as well as the lack of needed context to establish early vs. late parts of the year for Northern events from here on out.

The text also omits the typical format for Athaliah’s reign, no doubt because her reign was both illegitimate and deviated in succession so significantly from the progression of David’s line.

Because Jehu became king in early 3066, his reign is accounted as starting in that Southern calendar year, he didn’t start his “first year” until the Southern year of 3067, and the years sync up from there.

Calculations

3066: Joash (J) is born

3066: Athaliah begins reigning over Judah

3073: Joash (J) becomes king of Judah

3073: Athaliah is killed

Joash (J) became king in the seventh year of Jehu (2 Kings 12:1), which would be 3073.

Joash (J) was seven years old at the time (2 Kings 11:21; 2 Chronicles 24:1), which means he was born in 3066. This is why he had a nurse when Jehoshabeath stole him away and hid him (2 Kings 11:2): he was still an infant.

²⁴ Credit: me.

Athaliah reigned for six full years (2 Kings 11:3; 2 Chronicles 22:12), which would be from 3067-3072, and then she was deposed in the seventh year (2 Kings 11:4; 2 Chronicles 23:1).

3094: Jehoahaz (I) becomes co-regent with Jehu in Israel

3096: Joash (J) and Jehoiada change the system for repairing the Temple (2 Kings 12:6)

3096: Jehu dies

3096: Jehoahaz (I) becomes sole king of Israel

Jehu reigned for 28 years (2 Kings 10:36), and because he had no co-reign at the beginning of his rule, he must have stopped reigning in 3094.

Jehoahaz (I) began reigning in Israel in the 23rd year of Joash (J) (2 Kings 13:1), which would be 3096. This means Jehu established a co-reign with Jehoahaz (I) in 3094 and then died in 3096.

3088: Amaziah is born (2 Kings 14:2; 2 Chronicles 25:1)

3110: Jehoash (I) becomes co-regent with Jehoahaz (I) in Israel

3111: Jehoahaz (I) dies

3111: Jehoash (I) becomes sole king of Israel

3113: Joash (J) dies

3113: Amaziah becomes king of Judah

3115: Jeroboam II becomes co-regent with Jehoash (I) in Israel

3127: Jehoash (I) dies

3127: Jeroboam II becomes sole king of Israel

3142: Amaziah dies

Joash (J) reigned for 40 years (2 Kings 12:1; 2 Chronicles 24:1), and because he didn't have a co-reign with his father, he must have stopped reigning in 3113.

Jehoahaz (I) reigned for 17 years (2 Kings 13:1), which started in 3094 and ended in 3111 or started in 3096 and ended in 3113.

Jehoash (I) became king in the 37th year of Joash (J) (2 Kings 13:10), which would be 3110. Therefore, Jehoash (I) began a co-reign with Jehoahaz (I) in 3110, and Jehoahaz (I) died in either 3111 or 3113.

Jehoash (I) reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 13:10), which started in 3110 and ended in 3126, started in 3111 and ended in 3127, or started in 3113 and ended in 3129.

Amaziah became king of Judah in the second year of Jehoash (I) (2 Kings 14:1), which would be either 3112, 3113, or 3115. If he had a co-reign with Joash (J) (which is possible but not necessarily the case, based on the language of 2 Kings 12:21 and 2 Chronicles 24:27), then because Joash (J) stopped reigning in 3113, Amaziah's two start dates would be 3112 and 3113 or 3113 and 3115. Otherwise, he had a single transition upon the death of Joash (J) in 3113.

Amaziah reigned 29 years (2 Kings 14:2; 2 Chronicles 25:1). The people of Judah had to establish Amaziah's son Uzziah as king in his place after his death (2 Kings 14:21; 2 Chronicles 26:1), which, along with Uzziah's age of 16 at the time he became king, means that Amaziah had no co-reign with Uzziah. Therefore, the 29 years ended with his death, which would be in either 3141, 3142, or 3145.

Amaziah died 15 years after Jehoash (I) (2 Kings 14:17; 2 Chronicles 25:25), which means Jehoash (I) died in 3126, 3127, or 3129.

Jeroboam II has two start dates for the beginning of his reign: the 15th year of Amaziah (2 Kings 14:23) and 27 years before the beginning of Uzziah's reign (2 Kings 15:1). One was the beginning of a co-reign with Jehoash (I), and one was the year Jehoash (I) died.²⁵

That means the two start dates for Jeroboam II were 3114/3115/3117 and 3127/3128/3130. The former must have been when his co-reign with Jehoash (I) began, and the latter must have been when Jehoash (I) died. However, the only option for Jehoash's death that works with the previously identified options of 3126/3127/3129 is 3127. Therefore, Jehoash (I) died in 3127.

This means Amaziah started reigning in 3113 and died in 3142. This means there is no evidence of a co-reign between Amaziah and Joash (J), and Joash (J) was murdered in 3113.

²⁵ The only alternative to a relatively long co-reign between Jehoash and Jeroboam is a gap of more than a decade between Amaziah and Uzziah. However, I find it impossible to believe that God would provide no information about such a long period in Judah's history when there was no king on the throne, especially in 2 Chronicles, which is all about the history of the kings of Judah. Furthermore, why would the people have not simply made Azariah king at a young age? As he became king at 16 (2 Kings 14:21), he would have been three or four years old before the supposed gap. While it's true that that is awfully young to be a king, there are examples in the Bible of young children becoming kings in Judah, with an advisor overseeing the kingdom while the child is growing: Joash was seven when he became king, and Josiah was eight. Why wait until Azariah was 16? It's not even the age of adulthood in the Bible (that would be 20). See also the Commentary section for more justification for choosing the long co-reign option.

It also means Jehoahaz (I) died in 3111, and the 16 years of Jehoash (I) ran from 3111 to 3127. Finally, it means Jeroboam II started his co-reign with Jehoash (I) in 3115.

3126: Uzziah is born (2 Kings 14:21; 2 Kings 15:2; 2 Chronicles 26:1; 2 Chronicles 26:3)

3142: Uzziah becomes king of Judah

3169: Jotham is born (2 Kings 15:33; 2 Chronicles 27:1; 2 Chronicles 27:8)

3180: Jeroboam II dies

3180: Zechariah becomes sole king of Israel

3181: Shallum murders Zechariah

3181: Shallum becomes king of Israel

3181: Menahem murders Shallum

3181: Menahem becomes king of Israel

3191: Pekahiah becomes co-regent with Menahem in Israel

3192: Menahem dies

3192: Pekahiah becomes sole king of Israel

3194: Pekah murders Pekahiah

3194: Pekah becomes king of Israel

3194: Jotham becomes co-regent with Uzziah in Judah

3196: Uzziah dies

3196: Jotham becomes sole king of Judah

3214: Hoshea murders Pekah

3214: Hoshea becomes king of Israel

Zechariah became king in the 38th year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:8), which would be 3180. However, Jeroboam II reigned for 41 years (2 Kings 14:23), which would either have started in 3115 and ended in 3156 or started in 3127 and ended in 3168. This means he had a co-reign with his son that started in either 3156 or 3168, and he died in 3180. We will have to table the question of which year the co-reign started in for now.

Note carefully that 2 Kings 15:8 says, “In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months.” This is different

from other descriptions of royal reigns in the Bible, which would normally say, “In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel, and reigned six months in Samaria.” Why the difference? Because the Jewish accounting system doesn’t have a great way to express absolute lengths of time that cross a New Year line.

In other words, according to the standard system, if a king began ruling a week before the New Year, and he died a week after, he would be said to have reigned “for one year.” But the absolute length of time would be two weeks, so saying “one year” might, depending on context, be misleading. Therefore, this particular way of expressing Zechariah’s reign captured the absolute length of time (six months) while also indicating that he didn’t reign all six months in the same calendar year. Therefore, he began reigning in 3180 (when Jeroboam II died) but was murdered in 3181 (note that Zechariah’s murder shortly after the end of a co-reign with a mighty father parallels the murder of Elah at the hands of Zimri).

Shallum’s reign of “a full month” in the 39th year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:13) follows the standard format, so his entire reign was in 3181. This is why his killer Menahem was also said to have begun reigning in the 39th year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:17).

Menahem reigned for ten years (2 Kings 15:17), which means he stopped reigning in 3191. However, his son Pekahiah began reigning in Uzziah’s 50th year (2 Kings 15:23), which would be 3192. Therefore, Pekahiah began a co-reign with Menahem in 3191, and Menahem died in 3192.

Pekahiah was murdered by Pekah in the 52nd year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15:27), which means Pekahiah’s two-year reign (2 Kings 15:23) started with the death of Menahem and ended with his own death. Therefore, Pekahiah was murdered in 3194.

Uzziah reigned 52 years (2 Kings 15:2; 2 Chronicles 26:3), which means he stopped reigning in 3194. However, his son Jotham became king in the second year of Pekah (2 Kings 15:32). Therefore, Uzziah’s 52 years must have ended when Jotham began a co-reign with him, as described in 2 Chronicles 26:21. Therefore Uzziah died in 3196.

Pekah reigned for 20 years (2 Kings 15:27), which means he was murdered by Hoshea in 3214. Thus the “20th year of Jotham” in which Hoshea began reigning (2 Kings 15:30) would be dated from the beginning of Jotham’s co-reign with Uzziah.

3168: Zechariah becomes co-regent with Jeroboam II in Israel

3190: Ahaz is born (2 Kings 16:2; 2 Chronicles 28:1)

3202: Hezekiah is born (2 Kings 18:2; 2 Chronicles 29:1)

3210: Ahaz becomes co-regent with Jotham in Judah

3211: Ahaz deposes Jotham

3211: Ahaz becomes sole king of Judah

3224: Hoshea becomes king of Israel for the second time

3227: Ahaz dies

3227: Hezekiah becomes king of Judah

3231: Assyria besieges Israel (2 Kings 18:9)

3233: Assyria conquers Israel

Jotham reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 15:33; 2 Chronicles 27:1; 2 Chronicles 27:8), which could be starting in 3194 and ending in 3210 or starting in 3196 and ending in 3212. Ahaz began reigning in the 17th year of Pekah (2 Kings 16:1), which would be 3211.

This means Jotham had two ending points during the reign of Pekah. So why is there a reference to his 20th year when Hoshea began reigning, especially as there is no further information about Jotham that could clarify when he died?

Jotham's age and reign are repeated in 2 Chronicles 27:1 and 2 Chronicles 27:8, which also happened when Jehoram (J) had an unusual reign that required careful analysis.

This time, instead of a temporary co-reign, I believe Ahaz deposed Jotham and removed him from the throne before his death. This is why Jotham's death is not relevant to the later progression of kingly reigns, but why Hoshea's start is still given in terms of Jotham's reign, as Jotham's removal from the throne was illegitimate.

There are several pieces of evidence for this theory:

- Despite Jotham being a righteous king, precious little text is devoted to describing his reign in 2 Chronicles 27, which is a noticeably short chapter. This is because Jotham's reforms and military might were reversed immediately by Ahaz and ultimately accomplished little.
- 2 Chronicles 27:2 draws special attention to the corruption of the Judean people, which would explain why they went along with Ahaz' overthrow of a legitimate, righteous Davidic king.
- 2 Chronicles 28:19 says that Ahaz "encouraged moral decline in Judah." A son deposing his righteous, still legitimate father and then acting as if that was an appropriate thing to do would certainly poison the public character of the nation.
- It makes more sense of Isaiah 7, 2 Kings 16, 2 Chronicles 28.

There are three recorded instances in Scripture where Israel and Syria invade Judah during this time period: Isaiah 7, 2 Kings 16, and 2 Chronicles 28 (while Isaiah 7 at first glance appears to be the same invasion as 2 Kings 16, I will explain in the Commentary section why I believe that isn't the case). There seems to be a contradiction between 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28, as in the former, Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria helps Ahaz, while in the latter, Tiglath-Pileser distresses him.

I propose that Isaiah 7 actually occurred during the reign of Jotham, after the death of Uzziah (especially because Isaiah received his commission as prophet in the year Uzziah died, as recorded in Isaiah 6) but before Ahaz became co-regent. God sent Isaiah to Ahaz, who was terrified (Isaiah 7:2), in an attempt to establish a relationship with the future king and encourage him to trust the Lord for deliverance, but Ahaz reacted petulantly and rebelliously (Isaiah 7:12).

This invasion was the one referenced in 2 Kings 15:37, which says that "in those days [i.e., the days of Jotham] the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah." In this invasion, the failure of Syria and Israel to prevail against Judah (Isaiah 7:1) were due to Jotham's military might (2 Chronicles 27:6).

In 2 Kings 16, Rezin and Pekah again invaded, this time after Ahaz deposed Jotham, no doubt because the two invading kings were eager to take advantage of the chaos in Judah and the removal of Jotham's might from the throne (and because God was using them for judgment against the wickedness of Ahaz and the people of Judah). While Ahaz was initially able to withstand them (2 Kings 16:5), he knew he needed help, so he sent to the king of Assyria to save him, which worked. Tiglath-Pileser came to his aid and killed Rezin. Ahaz then acted even more unfaithfully by recreating the altar that was in Damascus (note that Ahaz worshipping according to the pattern of the Syrians he had just defeated was similar to what Amaziah did with the gods of Edom).

If Jotham was still on the throne at this time (and we know he was still alive, because Hoshea's murder of Pekah was given in terms of Jotham's reign), there is no way he would have allowed the desecration of the Temple worship system Ahaz committed in 2 Kings 16:10-18. This is strong evidence that Jotham had been removed from the throne before his death.

2 Chronicles 28 records a third invasion of Judah by Syria and Pekah, in which Ahaz sent to Tiglath-Pileser, but the king of Assyria distressed him and did not help him. This time, however, Rezin's name is not mentioned, because he was killed in the second invasion. During this third invasion, Ahaz attempted to use the same gambit of appealing to Assyria that had worked previously. Unfortunately for him, his continual unfaithfulness to the LORD

and encouragement of moral decline in his people (as described in 2 Chronicles 18:19 – this would have started in earnest when he deposed Jotham) led to the foolishness of his strategy being exposed: even though he was already being invaded by four different nations, Assyria invaded him as well and made his situation worse (this reflects how our sins seem to be our salvation at first but end up being our ruin in the end).

Therefore, either Ahaz began a co-reign in 3210 and deposed Jotham in 3211 or began a co-reign in 3211 and deposed Jotham in 3212.

Hoshea began ruling in the 12th year of Ahaz (2 Kings 17:1), which would have been in 3222, 3223, or 3224. This cannot refer to the end of a co-reign, as Hoshea gained his throne via conspiracy and murder. The fact that this happened 8-10 years after Hoshea murdered Pekah and that this beginning of a reign is given in terms of Ahaz alone (implying Jotham was dead by this time) suggest an unexplained gap of some sort. I like Jordan's suggestion that Assyria kept Hoshea in his role of governor (though he declared himself king at first) until Ahaz's 12th year, at which time the king of Assyria allowed him to reign.²⁶

Ahaz reigned for 16 years (2 Kings 16:2; 2 Chronicles 28:1), which must have ended in 3226, 3227, or 3228. Hezekiah began ruling in the third year of Hoshea (2 Kings 18:1), which would be in 3225, 3226, or 3227. There is no evidence of a co-reign between Ahaz and Hezekiah (this is particularly important, as after the Assyrian conquest of Israel, there is no more bouncing back and forth between Israel and Judah to provide the contextual clues needed to map out co-reigns), so Ahaz died in either 3226 or 3227.

To figure out the exact timeline of Hezekiah and Hoshea, we need to look to Isaiah 7:8, which states that “within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, so that it will not be a people.” This statement seems bizarre at first, as the destruction of Northern Israel by Assyria happened much sooner than 65 years after the rule of Ahaz. Furthermore, no other event recorded in Scripture seems to fulfill this prophecy, except perhaps Josiah's cleansing of the North from idol worship, but that happened well over 65 years after Ahaz's rule.

However, if we consider that Assyria conquered Northern Israel in Hezekiah's sixth year / Hoshea's ninth year (2 Kings 17:1; 2 Kings 17:6; 2 Kings 18:10), which would be 3232 or 3233, we can work backwards and see if anything significant happened at the time. And indeed, 65 years before 3233 would be 3168, which was one of the two options for the beginning of the co-reign between Jeroboam II and his son Zechariah.

²⁶ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1992/06/01/4_06/

To understand the significance of this, we have to look at 2 Kings 13. In this chapter, during the reign of Jehoahaz, God delivered Israel into the hands of Syria. But Jehoahaz pleaded with the Lord, and the Lord gave them a deliverer from the Syrians. Then in the days of Jehoahaz's son Jehoash, Elisha tried to help Jehoash destroy Syria, but Jehoash responded faithlessly, and so Syria was preserved, although Jehoash did recapture cities from them.

Interestingly, the text also tells us that the Lord's compassion to Israel during the days of Jehoahaz and Jehoash was because of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God was not willing to destroy Northern Israel yet. In fact, we learn in chapter 14 that God sent Jonah to promise the restoration of Israel's territory that had been seized by Syria, which was fulfilled by Jeroboam II. God did not blot out Israel's name, but rather He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam II.

What therefore seems to have happened is that when Jeroboam set his son Zechariah on the throne, it was the end of Jeroboam's 41 years of might and deliverance of Israel, as well as the beginning of the end for Israel. By the time Isaiah visited Ahaz, Israel had sunk so low from the relative high of Jehu's day that it was now colluding with Syria, rather than being oppressed by them. Moreover, it was seeking to end the Davidic kingdom in Judah and replace it with a puppet king (Isaiah 7:5-6). Obviously, at this point, Israel was beyond saving.

Therefore, Zechariah's co-reign with Jeroboam II started in 3168, Assyria conquered Israel in 3233, Hezekiah became king in 3227, Ahaz died in 3227, and Hoshea became king in 3224.

The exact timing of Ahaz's reign is still unclear, as Jotham's 16 years and Ahaz's 16 years are still not fully mapped out, although I believe we can be confident we can move forward no matter what with the correct dating of the beginning of Hezekiah's reign and the destruction of Israel by Assyria.

Looking back at the data in 2 Chronicles, I noticed that up to this point, the length of reign given in that book for a king of Judah who spent time as a co-regent has always started with the year that he became a co-regent:

- Asa is never said to have reigned for 41 years in 2 Chronicles, unlike in 1 Kings 15:10. However, he is said to have died in his 41st year (2 Chronicles 16:13). I believe this unusual construction serves to fit the pattern.
- Jehoram's eight years are from his co-reign with Jehoshaphat to his own death.
- Ahaziah's one year is from his co-reign with Jehoram to his own death.

This general rule flows out of Interpretative Key 6, which stated that listed ages of kings of Judah refer to their age when their co-reigns began. Therefore, I believe we are meant to

infer that Jotham's 16 years started with his co-reign with Uzziah in 3194 and ended when he made his son Ahaz co-regent when he turned 20 in 3210. One year later, in 3211, Ahaz deposed Jotham.

Now, this may seem a bit tenuous, especially because it means Ahaz's 16 years would then have started when he deposed his father, not when his co-regency began. However, given the abnormal circumstances of Ahaz's reign, it is not out of the question that his reign would have been accounted differently. Until better evidence one way or the other can be found about the beginning of Ahaz's reign, I think I am justified in adopting this approach for now.

Commentary

Point 1

Jehu began reigning in a Sabbath year, which represented rest for Israel from the corruptive influence of Jezebel, and Joash (J) also began reigning in a Sabbath year, which represented rest for Judah from the corruptive influence of Jezebel's daughter Athaliah.

Point 2

Athaliah was killed exactly 50 years after Omri moved the capital of Israel to Samaria, which as previously discussed, was the point in time the corruption in Judah could be traced back to. Thus, this may have represented a sort of metaphorical Jubilee, where in the 50th year, Judah was freed from Samaritan oppression and returned to its proper Davidic inheritance.

Point 3

There is a parallel between the start of David's reign and the start of Amaziah's reign. David executed the Amalekite who claimed to have murdered David's adoptive father Saul (2 Samuel 1), who was standing in the way of David becoming king. David also killed the men who murdered Ishbosheth, who was an obstacle to David reigning over the Northern tribes (2 Samuel 4).

All three of the men David executed expected to be rewarded. Perhaps the men who killed Joash also thought to be rewarded by Amaziah for clearing a path to him becoming king. Instead, he put them to death (2 Kings 14:5).

Point 4

There is a potential explanation for the long co-reign between Jehoash (I) and Jeroboam II that started only four years after the death of Jehoahaz (I). Jeroboam II became co-regent in 3115, two years into Amaziah's solo reign. We know Amaziah was faithful for a time, but

then he defeated the Edomites and decided to worship the gods he had captured from them (2 Chronicles 25). God then led Amaziah to challenge Jehoash (I) in battle, which resulted in Jehoash capturing Amaziah, breaking down the wall of Jerusalem, and taking riches and hostages from Jerusalem before returning home.

I would propose that Amaziah's apostasy happened in 3115, and when Jehoash (I) was challenged by Amaziah and went to face him, he set his son Jeroboam on the throne temporarily, much as Jehoshaphat had set Jehoram (J) on the throne in Judah to attend to governance while he went out to war. However, unlike Jehoram, Jeroboam proved to be mighty (2 Kings 14:28). It's even possible that he restored Israel's territory (2 Kings 14:25) while his father was in Judah. Even if not, Jehoash might have considered it useful to keep his son on the throne, because he was such an effective ruler.

Point 5

The co-reign between Jeroboam II and Zechariah was also long (3168-3180). Most likely Jeroboam II set his son on the throne so far in advance in an attempt to train him up and prepare him to follow in his mighty father's footsteps, possibly in an attempt to avoid God's promise that Jehu's sons would only rule through the fourth generation (2 Kings 10:30; 2 Kings 15:12).

Point 6

My justification for putting Isaiah 7 before Ahaz started ruling is that it makes sense of the "Immanuel" prophecies of Isaiah 7-8. Consider: Hezekiah was born in 3202. Ahaz was 20 when he became king, which means he was born in 3190. That means he was 12 when Hezekiah was born.

Let's say the events of Isaiah 7 occurred in or not long before early 3202 (when Ahaz was a preteen). God's intention in sending Isaiah to Ahaz was to show the future king the proper path to navigate the judgment on Judah's wickedness that Rezin and Pekah would represent once he became king (similar to how in 2 Chronicles 20 Jehoshaphat was able through faithfulness to endure the wrath promised him in 2 Chronicles 19:2). When Ahaz rejected the idea of relying on God, Isaiah predicted that a virgin would bear a son, who would be called "Immanuel." If Ahaz had been married as a child for political reasons, but he hadn't yet become intimate with his wife (because he hadn't yet entered puberty), then it's possible Hezekiah was born via an immaculate conception (he was certainly a type of Christ, and it's normal for prophecies in the Old Testament to have a near-term fulfillment in addition to their ultimate fulfillment in Christ).

According to Isaiah, before Immanuel would know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that Ahaz dreaded (Ephraim, where Syria's forces were deployed, as stated in

Isaiah 7:2) would be forsaken by both her kings (Isaiah 7:16), i.e., Rezin and Pekah. Rezin was killed while Pekah was still king (as seen in 2 Kings 16), and Pekah was killed in 3214, when Hezekiah was 12. As mentioned previously, the age of accountability (i.e., the age of adulthood) in the Bible is 20, so both kings were dead before Hezekiah was legally old enough to know good from evil.

Isaiah 8 takes place just before the invasion of 2 Kings 16 (Rezin is mentioned as still alive in Isaiah 8:6, but Isaiah 8:3-4 says that Isaiah's newborn wouldn't even get his first words out before Assyria's destruction of Syria and killing of Rezin would happen, as recorded in 2 Kings 16:9). Isaiah 8:6-7 describes Assyria's eventual conquest of Northern Israel, but then Isaiah 8:8 mentions an Assyrian invasion of Judah, where the king of Assyria would stretch out his wings (i.e., armies) through the land of Immanuel. If Hezekiah was Immanuel, this would be the invasion of Judah by Assyria in the 14th year of Hezekiah, as recorded in 2 Kings 18-19.

Note that Sennacherib spread his forces throughout Judah (2 Kings 18:13), but only "reached up to the neck" (Isaiah 8:8), in that he didn't capture Jerusalem. Isaiah's reassurance to Hezekiah that God would deliver Judah in 2 Kings 19:5-7 is even more impactful when you realize that Isaiah had received the prophecy of Isaiah 8 (indicating that Judah would not be overcome) many years earlier, before Hezekiah even became king.

The Last Days of Judah

Calculations

3228: Hezekiah restores Temple worship (2 Chronicles 29:3)

3241: Assyria invades Judah (2 Kings 18:13)

3244: Manasseh is born (2 Kings 21:1; 2 Chronicles 33:1)

3256: Hezekiah dies (2 Kings 18:2; 2 Kings 20:6; 2 Chronicles 29:1)

3256: Manasseh becomes king of Judah

Given that Manasseh was 12 years old when he became king (and given the lack of any evidence pointing toward a co-reign), there would not have been a co-reign between him and his father.

3287: Amon is born (2 Kings 21:19; 2 Chronicles 33:21)

3303: Josiah is born (2 Kings 22:1; 2 Chronicles 34:1)

3309: Amon becomes co-regent with Manasseh in Judah

3311: Manasseh dies (2 Kings 21:1; 2 Chronicles 33:1)

3311: Amon is killed

3311: Josiah becomes king of Judah

After the destruction of Northern Israel by Assyria (where we lose the back and forth between Judah and Israel that exposes co-reigns), there is only one transition of Judean rule that is not clearly indicated to happen upon the death or removal from the throne of the previous king: from Manasseh to Amon. Amon reigned for two years (2 Kings 21:19; 2 Chronicles 33:21), but there are two possibilities for those two years: the most obvious is that he assumed the throne upon Manasseh's death and reigned for the next two years, but he could also have assumed the throne two years before Manasseh died and then died in the same calendar year as Manasseh.

As it turns out, the 70 years of Babylonian domination only truly makes sense if there was a co-reign between Amon and Manasseh, such that Josiah became king the same calendar year that Manasseh died. This is another LOLI, but while I have yet to find a Bible verse conclusively confirming this interpretation (although I suspect there is one out there), there are several pieces of evidence that support the idea:

- Manasseh was taken into captivity briefly in Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:11). It would make sense that Amon would take over the throne when Manasseh was captured, and when Manasseh returned, they would have had a co-regency until Manasseh died.
- After returning from Babylon, Manasseh purged the foreign gods, idols, and altars from the Temple and Jerusalem and commanded the people of Judah to worship the LORD (2 Chronicles 33:15-17). Amon, however, “served the idols that his father had served and worshiped them” (2 Kings 21:21) and “sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made and served them” (2 Chronicles 33:22). While there were definitely still idols in the land of Judah after Manasseh’s death (which Josiah completely purged), Manasseh had gotten enough of a head start on the cleansing of Jerusalem that we would expect to see some language about Amon rebuilding or replacing the idols of Manasseh. The fact that we don’t suggests that he worshiped those idols while Manasseh was in Babylon, and he died soon enough after Manasseh’s death that he didn’t have time to replace them.
- The text devoted to Amon is extremely short (2 Kings 21:19-23 and 2 Chronicles 33:21-24), suggesting that he didn’t have two full years of independent reign to wreak spiritual havoc upon Judah.
- Hananiah’s false prophecy that the exile of Jehoiachin would last only two years (Jeremiah 28:1-4) might have been inspired by the exile of Manasseh in Babylon, which perhaps lasted two years and then ended the same calendar year he later died in.
- Manasseh probably would have performed the covenant renewal that Josiah did, had he not died so shortly after his conversion. The model I’m proposing holds that Manasseh died the same year he returned from exile, which explains why he didn’t perform a greater cleansing of Judah and Jerusalem.

Also, 2 Kings 21:23-24 and 2 Chronicles 33:24-25 (and the fact that Josiah was eight years old when he became king) make clear that there was no co-reign between Amon and Josiah, so Josiah became king for the first and only time upon Amon’s death.

Note that 3311 was a Sabbath year, which represents the rest from idolatry that Manasseh in his final year and then Josiah brought to Judah. Note also that Amon’s death in the same year as Manasseh after a two-year co-reign continues the pattern established by Baasha/Elah and Ahab/Ahaziah.

3319: Josiah begins to seek God (2 Chronicles 34:3)

3323: Josiah begins to purge Judah of idols (2 Chronicles 34:3)

3331: Josiah renews the covenant and restores the Passover (2 Kings 22:3; 2 Kings 23:23; 2 Chronicles 34:8; 2 Chronicles 35:19)

3342: Josiah dies (2 Kings 22:1; 2 Chronicles 34:1)

3319: Jehoahaz (J) is born (2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chronicles 36:2)

3342: Jehoahaz (J) becomes king of Judah

Note that the people of the land made Jehoahaz king after Josiah's death (2 Kings 23:30; 2 Chronicles 36:1), so there couldn't have been a co-reign between them.

3342: Pharaoh Necho deposes Jehoahaz (J) (2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chronicles 36:2)

3317: Jehoiakim is born (2 Kings 23:36; 2 Chronicles 36:5)

3342: Pharaoh Necho makes Jehoiakim king of Judah

3345: Nebuchadnezzar becomes co-regent with Nabopolassar in Babylon

3346: Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish

3346: Nabopolassar dies

3346: Nebuchadnezzar becomes sole king of Babylon

According to the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim (Jeremiah 46:2), which according to Jeremiah 25:1 was Nebuchadnezzar's "first year" (i.e., the year after he became king). This means Nebuchadnezzar became king in 3345, the third year of Jehoiakim.

We know from other historical records that Nebuchadnezzar's father Nabopolassar died shortly after the battle at Carchemish and that Nebuchadnezzar was proclaimed king after his death, in the same year he died. This means (because the Bible is a reliable historical document) that Nebuchadnezzar must have had a co-reign with Nabopolassar that started in 3345, and then Nebuchadnezzar became sole king the following year.

This explains the years provided in Jeremiah 52:28-30, two of which are a year off from what is described elsewhere:

- Jehoiachin went into captivity in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kings 24:12). We know from 2 Kings 24:8 that Jehoiachin was 18 when he became king, but 2 Chronicles 36:9 says he was eight, which must be tracing back to the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, similar to the years of Asa and Ahaziah (J) in 2 Chronicles (as discussed previously). However, Jeremiah 52:28 indicates Jehoiachin's captivity occurred in the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar, so the eight years must trace back to his co-regency, while the seven years trace back to his solo reign.

- Jeremiah 52:12 indicates that the captivity that occurred when Jerusalem was destroyed happened in Nebuchadnezzar's 19th year, but Jeremiah 52:29, a mere 17 verses later, says it was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. There's no way this could be referring to a different captivity, as Jerusalem was under siege in Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year. Therefore, the 19 years must trace back to his co-regency, while the 18 years trace back to his solo reign.

3345: Nebuchadnezzar takes the first round of captives (including Daniel and his friends) to Babylon

3345: Jehoiakim becomes Nebuchadnezzar's vassal

Given the prophecy about the nature of Jehoiakim's death in Jeremiah 22:18-19, it seems unlikely he was taken captive to Babylon. Instead, I would interpret 2 Chronicles 36:6-7 as referring to the invasion of Judah that happened in Jehoiakim's third year, when Daniel was taken captive (Daniel 1:1-2). Nebuchadnezzar bound Jehoiakim in bronze "to carry him off to Babylon," but Jehoiakim appears to have saved himself from captivity by promising to switch his allegiance from Egypt to Babylon, which he did for three years before rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1). The carrying off of articles from Judah to the temple in Babylon in 2 Chronicles 36:7 is therefore the exact same event mentioned in Daniel 1:2.

3348: Daniel becomes ruler and chief administrator of Babylon

A simple explanation for the "three years" of training for Daniel and his friends (Daniel 1:5) that had to have started in 3345 but ended in Nebuchadnezzar's second year (Daniel 2:1) is that Nebuchadnezzar's "second year" is being timed from his solo reign, which started in 3346. Therefore, Daniel started his training in 3345, finished his training in 3348, then interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream that same year (much as Ahab died after three years of peace between Israel and Syria, in the third year).

3353: Jehoiakim dies (2 Kings 23:36; 2 Chronicles 36:5)

3335: Jehoiachin is born (2 Kings 24:8)

3353: Jehoiachin becomes king of Judah

As mentioned previously, 2 Chronicles 36:9 indicates that Jehoiachin became king in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar, which is also supported by the length of Jehoiakim's reign.

3353: Nebuchadnezzar takes the second round of captives (including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel) to Babylon

Jehoiachin reigned for three months and ten days (2 Chronicles 36:9), which is called “three months” in 2 Kings 24:8, because apparently the counting of months according to how many “beginning of months” have passed functions the same way as years in the Bible. The fact that his reign is given in months and days indicates he was taken captive the same year he started reigning.

2 Kings 24:12 confirms this by explicitly saying he was taken captive in Nebuchadnezzar’s eighth year. Thus, the “turn of the year” in 2 Chronicles 36:10 must refer to just before the end of the calendar year. The captivity of Jeremiah 52:28 would be those who were captured with Jehoiachin, including Ezekiel, whose chronological records are always made in terms of Jehoiachin’s captivity (starting in Ezekiel 1:2), which was 11 years before the destruction of Jerusalem (as seen in Ezekiel 40:1).

Note: Jeremiah 52:28 indicates that Nebuchadnezzar captured 3023 “Jews” with Jehoiachin, not “persons” (as used in Jeremiah 52:29). Whatever the nuanced meaning of “Jews,” I expect that it explains the discrepancy between the 3023 Jews in Jeremiah 52:28 and the 10,000 captives in 2 Kings 24:14-16.

3332: Zedekiah is born (2 Kings 24:18; 2 Chronicles 36:11; Jeremiah 52:1)

3353: Nebuchadnezzar makes Zedekiah king of Judah

3362: Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem (2 Kings 25:1; Jeremiah 52:4)

3364: Babylon destroys Jerusalem (2 Kings 24:18; 2 Kings 25:2; 2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 52:1; Jeremiah 52:5; Jeremiah 52:12)

3364: Nebuchadnezzar takes the third round of captives to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:29)

3369: Nebuchadnezzar takes the fourth round of captives to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:30)

3389: Evil-Merodach becomes co-regent with Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon

3390: Nebuchadnezzar dies

3390: Evil-Merodach becomes sole king of Babylon

3390: Evil-Merodach releases Jehoiachin from captivity

2 Kings 25:27 states that the 37th year of Jehoiachin’s captivity was the year Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon. We know from Jeremiah 27:7 that Babylon would fall during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson, which means Belshazzar was Nebuchadnezzar’s grandson (Daniel 5:30-31), which means Evil-Merodach was Nebuchadnezzar’s son.

However, Jeremiah 52:31 states that the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity was also the "first year" of Evil-Merodach, which means he must have had a one-year co-reign with Nebuchadnezzar that started in 3389 and ended with Nebuchadnezzar's death in 3390.

2972: Rehoboam and Israel forsake the law of the LORD

In Ezekiel 4:5-6, God tells Ezekiel that Israel had 390 years of iniquity leading up to the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem, while Judah had 40.

The siege of Jerusalem started in 3362 and ended with Jerusalem's destruction in 3364. Ezekiel's prophecy helps us interpret a previously unaddressed data point about Rehoboam: after Jeroboam established his false worship system, the priests, the Levites, and other members of the Northern tribes who feared God left Northern Israel and joined Rehoboam in Judah in 2969, making him strong for three years (2 Chronicles 11:13-17). However, Rehoboam then forsook the law of the LORD, "and all Israel along with him" (2 Chronicles 12:1).

It is not immediately apparent from this passage whether the three years ended in the third year, like the three years of peace between Israel and Syria at the end of Ahab's life, and thus Rehoboam apostatized in 2972, or whether they are more like the six years of Athaliah's rule, which ended in the seventh year, and thus Rehoboam apostatized in 2973. However, as the fall of Rehoboam and Israel is the most logical candidate for a "beginning of Israel's iniquity" that would lead to a judgment on the nation of Judah, not Northern Israel, we can see that it happened exactly 390 years before Babylon besieged Jerusalem, and therefore it occurred in 2972.

Interestingly, the destruction of Jerusalem was 390 years after Shishak's invasion of Jerusalem in 2974, which was a judgment on Rehoboam's apostasy. In Rehoboam's fifth year, Shishak king of Egypt invaded Jerusalem and ransacked the treasures of the Temple and the king's palace. However, because Rehoboam and the leaders of Israel humbled themselves, God decided not to allow Shishak to destroy Jerusalem, but rather He said, "they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations" (2 Chronicles 12:8).

Hence, even though the establishment of First Temple Judaism represented the end of the oppressions of the Israelites by foreign nations that plagued them during the time of the Judges, nonetheless from the time of Shishak forward they had to deal with invasions, plunderings, and dominations by foreign kings in response to their sinfulness. It would thus be fitting that the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar would wrap up the time period of this mode of discipline, as after Jerusalem's sacking, all Israel would finally be

fully removed from the land and be in complete service to the king of Babylon to finally end the idolatry that marked the First Temple era.

Regarding the 40 years of Judah, Josiah's faithful covenant renewal could not fix the wickedness of the hearts of the people of Judah. Hence, in Josiah's 13th year (Jeremiah 25:3), which would be 3324 (one year after Josiah began purging the land of idols – obviously God could tell that the external cleansing was not matched by an internal cleansing of the hearts of the people of Judah), God sent Jeremiah to call the people to repentance, and even though the official covenant renewal occurred in 3331, Jeremiah said that 23 years after he started preaching (i.e., by 3347), the people “still [had] not listened.” Obviously they never started listening before the destruction of Jerusalem, so there were 40 years of calling to repentance that began in 3324 and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 3364.

Assuming a 12-month year of 30 days per month, as is the Bible model, the siege that ran from the tenth day of the tenth month of 3362 to the ninth day of the fourth month of 3364 (2 Kings 25:1-3; Jeremiah 39:1-2; Jeremiah 52:4-7) would have lasted 539 days, not 430 (390 + 40).

My tentative proposed explanation for this: Jeremiah was put into prison twice during the siege of Jerusalem. In 3363 (the tenth year of Zedekiah and eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar), Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:1-5). While in prison, Jeremiah bought a field in Anathoth of Benjamin (Jeremiah 32:7-12).

At some point afterwards, Zedekiah released Jeremiah and was showing signs of panicked seeking of God, such as temporarily proclaiming liberty for slaves (Jeremiah 34:8-9) and asking Jeremiah to pray for him (Jeremiah 37:3). However, 50 days before the end of 3363, in the eleventh month, 390 days after the siege began, the Chaldeans paused the siege to deal with Pharaoh's army (Jeremiah 37:5). Jeremiah then “went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people” (Jeremiah 37:12), i.e., the field he had previously bought in Anathoth. This led to him being imprisoned for a second time, which lasted until the destruction of Jerusalem.

Possibly there was a long break in the siege from the eleventh month of 3363 to the second month of 3364, during which time the Chaldeans fought with the Egyptians. Zedekiah and his officials would have completely misinterpreted the pause of the siege as a triumph, the fruit of their brilliant plan of relying on Egypt for deliverance (which the king of Assyria had described as a “broken reed that pierces the hand of the man who leans on it” in Isaiah 36:6), rather than one last temporary reprieve necessitating immediate repentance. Zedekiah's prophets then assured him Nebuchadnezzar would not return (Jeremiah 37:19),

and Zedekiah kept Jeremiah in prison for the entire length of the reprieve (the “many days” of Jeremiah 37:16) because he thought he had proven all of Jeremiah’s prophecies wrong, only to secretly seek Jeremiah’s prophetic word when the Chaldeans finally did return (Jeremiah 37:17).

Because of their foolishness, Zedekiah and his officials would not have taken precautions during the reprieve to prepare for Nebuchadnezzar’s return, such that when the Chaldeans resumed the siege, they quickly caused a famine, and after 40 days they breached the city wall.

70 Years in Babylon

3360: The 70 years of Babylonian domination begin

Jeremiah 25-29 is the section of Scripture dealing with Jeremiah's prophecy about the 70 years in which Judah would be subject to Babylonian rule. However, to time the 70 years correctly, we have to pay very careful attention to the wording of the relevant Scripture passages.

In Jeremiah 27:4-8, God said that it pleased him to give dominion over the whole world (the nations known to Israel, not far flung peoples like Native Americans) to Nebuchadnezzar. The nations would serve him (Nebuchadnezzar), his son (Evil-Merodach), and his son's son (Belshazzar), at which point, Babylon would be judged. This judgment came when Darius the Mede killed Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30-31) and inflicted the judgment of Babylon by the Medes prophesied in Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 51.

In 2 Chronicles 36:20-21, we see that after the destruction of Jerusalem, "those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, where they became servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years." This verse therefore ties the Babylonian domination to the Sabbath.

It does not, however, explicitly say that there were 70 years of Babylonian domination after the conquest of Jerusalem. It just said the land "kept Sabbath to fulfill 70 years." Moreover, Jeremiah 25:11 says that "these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years," not Judah specifically. In Jeremiah 25:15ff and chapter 27, we see that the nations (both Israel and the countries around it) are offered a choice: voluntarily drink the cup of God's wrath and submit to Babylonian domination or else be destroyed by Babylon's military might.

While God made very clear through Jeremiah that any captives and articles of God that had already gone to Babylon would remain there for the entirety of the 70 years, God nonetheless attempted to give Judah the chance to voluntarily submit to Babylonian rule and thereby avoid complete destruction (no doubt Daniel and his three friends were attempting to secure the same mercy for Judah in their roles as chief officials and advisors to Nebuchadnezzar). It wasn't until the 19th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign that God had decided that enough was enough and allowed Jerusalem to be sacked (even during the siege preceding the destruction, Zedekiah still had the option to surrender and spare himself and the city, as seen in Jeremiah 38:17).

Note that this process of the nations (including Judah) being subjected to Babylonian rule didn't necessarily begin in 3364 exactly – it could have begun shortly before, and the time of Judah's full desolation after 3364 would fulfill the remainder of the 70 years. I therefore posit that the 70 years began in the Sabbath year of 3360. To explain why, I will take up James Jordan's idea that the 70 years of Babylonian domination made up for Sabbath years that Israel neglected to observe²⁷ (which explains 2 Chronicles 36:20-21), but modify it a bit.

The first thing to note is that the 70 years of Sabbath keeping had to include the ten new Sabbath years that would occur naturally during the 70 years. Therefore, the 70 years only made up for 60 missed Sabbaths, not 70. If 3360 was the final missed Sabbath year before the destruction of Jerusalem, then assuming 60 Sabbaths total were missed, the last Sabbath kept would be $3360 - (7 \times 60) = 2940$, the year the First Temple was completed. Importantly, 2940 was a Sabbath of Sabbaths (meaning it is divisible by 49), and 2941 was the 60th Jubilee from creation.

Would it make sense for Solomon's final observed Sabbath to be the year he completed the Temple? I believe so, using the following reconstruction of events.

When Solomon was born, the Lord loved him, and presumably it was in 2 Samuel 12:24-25 that the Lord confirmed to David that his second son with Bathsheba was the Solomon whom God told David would be his heir (1 Chronicles 22:9). After David's death, Solomon loved the Lord and walked in his father's statutes (1 Kings 3:3). When God appeared to him in a dream and offered him a gift, Solomon asked for wisdom, which pleased the Lord, who agreed to give him wisdom, in addition to riches and honor and peace.

Starting in 1 Chronicles 22 and 28-29, we see that David had charged Solomon with building the First Temple and had made preparations for it on Solomon's behalf. Therefore, Solomon knew his job was to build a temple.

In 2 Chronicles 1, however, we see the author begin to document Solomon's decline into failure immediately after describing him receiving wisdom. 2 Chronicles 1:13-17 describes Solomon violating two of the three commandments for kings in Deuteronomy 17:16-17: multiplying horses from Egypt and multiplying silver and gold (he also later violated the third, multiplying wives).

The structure of Bible narratives doesn't always run perfectly linearly, as evidenced by Genesis 1-2, which describes the week of creation through Day 7, then returns to Day 6 for

²⁷ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1993/04/01/5_04/

more details about Adam and Eve. Similarly, the end of 2 Chronicles 1 is likely a broad statement about Solomon's reign, with 2 Chronicles 2 going back to early in his reign.

Solomon was commissioned to build a temple, but we see in 2 Chronicles 2:1 that he was already planning to build a palace for himself. Thus, we can see that despite the wisdom God gave him, the seeds of the sinful desire that would ultimately lead to the splitting of the kingdom were already present before temple construction began. While God promised Solomon riches, He never told him to flaunt them or drench himself in money and excess.

2 Chronicles 8:16 says that the work of Solomon was "well-ordered" from the beginning of Temple construction to the end of it. This no doubt means he observed the Sabbath of 2933, built the Temple as ordered, and observed the Sabbath of Sabbaths of 2940.

At that point however, Solomon began to go off the rails. My speculation is that he didn't release the Israelite labor force in the Jubilee of 2941. We know that he never enslaved Israelites and put them to permanent forced labor, as he did with the Canaanites in the land (1 Kings 9:20-22; 2 Chronicles 8:7-10). However, he did raise a labor force out of Israel, in which each man had to alternate between working for a month, then returning home for two months (1 Kings 5:13-14). That force should have been released with the Jubilee of 2941, but 1 Kings 12:4 and 2 Chronicles 10:4 imply that it was still in effect when Solomon died. In fact, it was this issue that caused the kingdom to split.

Solomon would have kept the labor force in place to maintain the pace of construction he was set on. Recall that he spent 13 years building his palace, almost twice as long as was spent building God's house. Thus, he clearly was more focused on the glory of his own house than God's. Furthermore, after refusing to release the Israelite labor force, he ignored the Sabbath of 2947, no doubt because of a faithless concern that food production would suffer, and therefore so would his efforts.

As discussed earlier, Solomon did not dedicate the Temple until his palace was complete. This meant there were 13 additional years spent waiting for the consecration and use of the Temple, meaning God's work had to wait for Solomon's glory to be established. God no doubt intended to coincide the establishment of the Temple worship system with a Sabbath of Sabbaths, followed by the 60th Jubilee. But Solomon delayed God's plan so he could complete his palace.

God appeared to Solomon a second time after the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 9:1-9; 2 Chronicles 7:12-22), but His promise to recognize the Temple was coupled with a stern warning against apostasy and the consequences of him or his sons rejecting God, including destroying the buildings Solomon just completed. This is most likely because Solomon was already on a bad path, and God was trying to get him to course correct.

Instead, Solomon insulted Hiram with a displeasing gift of undesirable cities (1 Kings 9:10-13), then he continued to apply his labor force to build a whole slew of public works projects (1 Kings 9:15-19), and finally he built high places for the false gods his wives worshipped.

Throughout all this, Solomon kept ignoring the Sabbath year (and he would have ignored the next Jubilee if he had reigned long enough), and the kings of Judah who came after Solomon, no matter how righteous, never challenged these foundational sins, much as American leaders today never challenge certain sacred cows, such as the lending of money at interest.

In fact, we know Judah toyed with the idea of proclaiming liberty as a way of forestalling its destruction during the days of Zedekiah, but ultimately didn't go through with it (Jeremiah 34:8-22 – this is not the Jubilee law, but still a closely related part of the Mosaic Law). It wasn't until Babylon destroyed Jerusalem that this foundational sin established by Solomon was finally fully dealt with.

3368: Cyrus the Great is born (Daniel 5:31)

3430: Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon

3431: Cyrus the Great returns the Jews to Judah

3432: 70 years of anger end

3434: 70 years of fasting and mourning end

In 2 Chronicles 36:21-22 and Ezra 1:1, we see that the 70 years of Jeremiah ended when Cyrus king of Persia released the Jews from captivity in his first year as king and returned them to Judah to rebuild the Temple. However, we also see in Daniel 9:1-2 that in the first year of Darius the Mede, Daniel perceived that the 70 years of Jeremiah were at an end and prayed for the restoration of his people (note in particular that he asked God to “not delay” in verse 19). God responded by sending the angel Gabriel to give Daniel the prophecy of the 70 Weeks, which would start with “the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem” (Daniel 9:25) and run up to the coming of the Messiah.

There are two possible explanations for this duality between Cyrus the Persian and Darius the Mede:

- Darius the Mede was the king who conquered Babylon (Daniel 5:30-31), he was followed later by Cyrus, there are two 70-year periods foretold by Jeremiah in play here, and there was a gap between Daniel's prayer and the restoration of the Jews.

- Darius the Mede is a royal alias for Cyrus the Persian, and both names refer to Cyrus the Great, the man who is recorded in secular history as having conquered Babylon.

Obviously the latter option is much more simple and logical, and as James Jordan has explained thoroughly in his various articles exploring the chronologies of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, the Jews were accustomed to using multiple names for kings, even though Americans find this practice strange.²⁸

Therefore, the 70 years ended in 3430, a Sabbath of Sabbaths, when Cyrus conquered Babylon and became emperor. Cyrus then released the Jews at the beginning of his first year, 3431 (much as Hezekiah began restoring the Temple worship system at the beginning of his first year – 2 Chronicles 29:3), which was also the first year of Gabriel’s 70 Weeks.

Now, two prophets who were active during the time period of the rebuilding of the Temple were Haggai and Zechariah the son of Berechiah.²⁹ Both of their books mention a king named Darius, but we have to do further analysis to determine whether this is Darius the Mede or Darius the Persian (the king who completed the Second Temple, whom I will discuss shortly).

We find our answer in Zechariah 1 and Zechariah 7. In the second year of Darius (Zechariah 1:1), we see that God had been angry with Jerusalem and the cities of Judah for 70 years (Zechariah 1:12). Then in the fourth year of Darius (Zechariah 7:1), we find that the people of Judah had been fasting and mourning for 70 years (Zechariah 7:5) as a result of something to do with the end of the inhabitation and prosperity of Jerusalem and the cities around it (Zechariah 7:7).

The simplest explanation is that:

- This Darius is Darius the Mede, AKA Cyrus the Great.
- Cyrus indeed became king in 3430, at the end of the 70 years of Babylonian domination.
- Cyrus’ second year was 3432, and the 70 years of anger started with the besieging of Jerusalem in 3362.

²⁸ As Jordan has explained, in Daniel 6:28, the word for “and” can also be an appositive translated “that is,” indicating an alias. Ezra 6:14 also connects Cyrus to his title “Darius,” such that this verse says, “And they built and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the command of Cyrus (Darius) and Artaxerxes king of Persia.”

²⁹ In Ezra 5:1 and Ezra 6:14, Zechariah is called “the son of Iddo,” but the Hebrew word for “Iddo” can also mean “male descendant” and therefore can skip generations, which it appears to be doing here, when we consider Zechariah 1:1 and Zechariah 1:7. Both the latter verses indicate that Iddo was a prophet, and thus there is a focus here on the fact that Zechariah was a prophet descended from another prophet (possibly the Iddo of 2 Chronicles 9:29, 2 Chronicles 12:15, and 2 Chronicles 13:22?).

- Cyrus' fourth year was 3434, and the 70 years of fasting and mourning started with the destruction of Jerusalem in 3364.

Commentary

3430 was the 70th Sabbath of Sabbaths from creation (which as always syncs up with the timing of Sabbaths from the settling of Israel in the Promised Land), which means 3431 was the 70th Jubilee from creation. Cyrus' return of the Jews to their homeland in a Jubilee year is highly appropriate, and it explains why Cyrus is referred to as a Messiah in Isaiah 45:1.

The fact that the rule of the Persian kings lasted 49 years, another cycle of seven Sabbaths (as I will discuss shortly), further reinforces the Jubilee symbolism and demonstrates that the 70 Weeks of Years represented ten additional Jubilees that connected Cyrus the Messiah to Jesus the Messiah.

Seven Weeks of Persian Rule

Calculations

3431: Cyrus the Great appoints Cambyses II as governor of Babylon

3431: Cyrus the Great removes Cambyses II as governor

3431: The Jews rebuild the altar

3432: The Jews lay the foundation of the Second Temple

3433: Cambyses II becomes co-regent with Cyrus in Persia

The Jews began temple reconstruction activities with the rebuilding of the altar in “the seventh month” (Ezra 3:1), which without a qualifier must be in the year 3431. This matches how timekeeping worked shortly after the Exodus, which is appropriate, as Jeremiah 37:7-8 indicates that the return from exile was a new Exodus for Israel.

After rebuilding the altar, the Jews began to bring in materials for the building’s reconstruction (Ezra 3:7) and then started construction of the temple structure by laying its foundation in the “second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem” (Ezra 3:8). The way this is expressed continues to match the Exodus pattern, so the foundation was laid in 3432.

If the Darius of Haggai is Cyrus the Great, just like he is in Zechariah’s book, then we see that in the sixth month of 3432 (Haggai 1:1), Haggai rebuked Joshua (AKA Jeshua) the high priest and Zerubbabel the governor for allowing the Jews to halt construction of the Second Temple. As the Biblical calendar year starts in the spring, the sixth month would have been in the fall, after the harvest. This is why Haggai tells the Jews, “You have sown much, and bring in little” (Haggai 1:6): the Jews immediately stopped construction of the Temple after the laying of the foundation and focused on their own paneled houses instead (Haggai 1:4), leaving the house of God in ruins (whose reconstruction was the entire justification for them being allowed to return to Judah in the first place, per Ezra 1:1-4). They then experienced a very unfruitful half-year in which they attempted to live normal lives without attending to the rebuilding of the Temple.

The Jews then obeyed God’s instructions through Haggai and began rebuilding in the sixth month of 3432 (Haggai 1:14-15). The following month (Haggai 2:1), Haggai calls attention to the sadness that those who had seen the First Temple felt upon seeing the beginnings of the Second Temple (which caused them to weep in Ezra 3:12-13) and promises that the Second Temple will end up being more glorious than the First Temple (Haggai 2:9). God

mentions that “in a little while” He will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land (i.e., the Gentiles and Israel), and will bring the nations and fill the Temple with glory, paid for with gold and silver (Haggai 2:6-8). This is a reference to the events of Esther, when two important things happened:

- Many non-Jews converted to Judaism (Esther 8:17). Some of these converts would have given gifts of gold and silver and other riches to be used to beautify the Temple.
- The Jews killed their enemies, but “did not lay a hand on the plunder” (Esther 9:10), which as James Jordan has explained, means they used it to beautify the Temple.³⁰

In Ezra 4:3, we see Zerubbabel and Joshua leading the reconstruction efforts after the laying of the foundation, but their adversaries discouraged and troubled them (Ezra 4:4), which is possibly why the Jews stopped building and focused on their own houses instead.

Even after Haggai led the Jews to resume construction in the sixth month of 3432, the adversaries of the Jews “hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia” (Ezra 4:5).

Now, we know from secular history that shortly after conquering Babylon, Cyrus the Great appointed his son Cambyses II as governor of northern Babylon. This governorship lasted nine months, from April until December, at which point Cyrus dismissed him from the post. Not long after, Babylonian records show both Cyrus and Cambyses as carrying the title “King of Babylon, King of the Lands,” suggesting that Cyrus established Cambyses as co-regent shortly after dismissing him from his governorship.

In Daniel 10-12, we see that Daniel had been mourning for three weeks in the third year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1-3). An angelic warrior appears to Daniel, mentions that he is resisting “the prince of the kingdom of Persia” (Daniel 10:13), and says that he also confirmed and strengthened Cyrus in his first year (Daniel 11:1).

I accept Jordan’s suggestion that this narrative has to do with Cambyses II.³¹ Cyrus must have appointed Cambyses as governor in 3431, but because of the intervention of the angelic overlord of Persia, Cyrus removed Cambyses from the post (apparently Cambyses was no friend to the Jews). However, Cyrus must have made his son co-regent in 3433, at which point, Daniel began fasting and mourning, most likely hoping that by doing so he could have Cambyses removed from this position as well.

Unfortunately, while the angelic overlord of Persia had been resisting Cambyses (the prince of Persia) for the three weeks Daniel had been mourning (Daniel 10:13), he does not

³⁰ <https://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-2-the-battle-of-gog-and-magog/>

³¹ https://biblicalhorizons.com/1996/06/01/8_06/

promise Daniel that Cambyses will be removed. Instead, he indicates that he will watch over and fight for the Jews in Persia for the remainder of the reign of the Persian emperors, at which point, “the prince of Greece will come” (Daniel 10:20). This is obviously a reference to Alexander the Great, the Greek prince (later king) who conquered Persia and took over their empire.

If Daniel was mourning because Cambyses was in power, then Cambyses must have been an obstacle to the efforts of the Jews to restore the Temple worship system and rebuild Jerusalem. Therefore, even though the Jews had resumed construction of the Temple in late 3432, the counselors their adversaries hired must have been working with Cambyses (starting in 3433) to frustrate their efforts for the remainder of Cyrus’ reign (“all the days of Cyrus king of Persia,” during which Cambyses remained co-regent) and during all of Cambyses’ solo reign. As we will see shortly, Cambyses’ reign was followed by the chaotic half-year of Pseudo-Smerdis, after which Darius the Great took over Persia, which led to Temple reconstruction efforts finally resuming and succeeding.

3431: The seven Weeks of Years begin

3445: Darius the Great becomes king

3445: Darius the Great stops the Jews from rebuilding the city of Jerusalem

3447: The Jews resume the construction of the Second Temple again

3448: Darius the Great banishes Queen Vashti (Esther 1:3)

3451: The Jews complete the construction of the Second Temple

3452: Ezra comes to Jerusalem

3452: Darius the Great marries Esther (Esther 2:16)

3457: Haman attempts to exterminate the Jews (Esther 3:7)

3457: Purim is established (Esther 3:7)

3465: Nehemiah becomes governor of Judah (Nehemiah 2:1; Nehemiah 5:14)

3465: Nehemiah rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem

3477: Nehemiah returns to Darius the Great

3479: The seven Weeks of Years end

As mentioned before, in Daniel 9 Gabriel provides a prophecy to Daniel that fills in the gap between the decree of Cyrus and the coming of Jesus. He says that 69 weeks are between

those two events, divided into seven weeks and 62 weeks. For now, let's consider the seven weeks, during which time, "the street [would] be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times" (Daniel 9:25).

This is obviously a reference to the narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah, which deal with the rebuilding of the Temple and the wall of Jerusalem, despite fierce opposition from various hostile groups of adversaries. Several minor prophets (including Haggai and Zechariah, as previously mentioned) and parts of Daniel would also cover this time period. Finally, as mentioned, the narrative of Esther is also relevant, since it involves the glorification of the Second Temple.

Before we analyze this time period, let's resolve one potential confusion. The "command to restore and build Jerusalem" in Daniel 9:24 must be the decree of Cyrus the Great and not the command of Darius the Great in Ezra 6 for three reasons:

- Gabriel gave his prophecy to Daniel right before the decree of Cyrus. It is illogical to assume that there was an almost two-decade gap before the 70 weeks began, when a more logical candidate occurred right after Gabriel visited Daniel.
- The decree of Cyrus was a fulfillment of the Jeremiah prophecy that Daniel was just praying about in the first half of Daniel 9. To interpret Daniel 9:25 as referring to Darius' decree divorces the purpose of Gabriel's visit from the context of the preceding verses.
- Darius' decree was merely a reinforcement of Cyrus' decree, as Ezra 5 and 6 make clear. The Bible mentions Cyrus' decree at least four times because it is the initiating event of this entire section of Bible history. Darius' decree, on the other hand, was just a formality to permit the Jews to continue fulfilling Cyrus' decree. It therefore receives no other mention in Scripture.

Now that we've established that the seven weeks started with the decree of Cyrus, we next have to realize that all the stories in the latter half of Ezra, in Nehemiah, and in Esther concern a single king: Darius the Great. This Darius has three aliases: Darius king of Persia, Ahasuerus, and Artaxerxes king of Persia.

There are four pieces of evidence for this:

- Ezra 4 mentions that a letter from Artaxerxes causes work on the Temple to be discontinued until the second year of Darius king of Persia. Then in Ezra 6, Darius decrees that the Temple should be completed. The Temple is completed in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6:15). Then, in Ezra 7, the narrative goes back to Artaxerxes, only now we're in his seventh year. And the narrative continues through Nehemiah with Artaxerxes in place.

The only plausible interpretation is that the narrative is transitioning seamlessly

from the sixth year of Darius the Great to his seventh, especially because the letter in Ezra 7 makes clear that the purpose of Ezra's trip was to re-establish Temple worship and observance of the Law of Moses properly, so a long gap between Ezra 6 and Ezra 7 wouldn't make sense (as opposed to it happening the year after the Temple was completed).

Furthermore, in Nehemiah 6:10, which takes place during the reign of Artaxerxes, the Temple is clearly already complete, so it couldn't have been a second Darius who completed the Temple after Artaxerxes' death. "Darius king of Persia" and "Artaxerxes king of Persia" must therefore be different names for the same person.

- If the "Darius king of Persia" of Ezra 4:5 is also the "Ahasuerus" of Ezra 4:6 and the "Artaxerxes" of Ezra 4:7, then the accusation of Ezra 4:6 is the letter immediately following that verse, instead of a completely out of context reference that is never explored. Furthermore, the letter being sent to Artaxerxes also picks up the narrative thread concerning Darius in Ezra 4:5.
- The events of the Book of Esther running parallel to those of the Book of Ezra explains why the city of Shushan was perplexed in Esther 3:15: Darius had recently sponsored the completion of the Jewish Temple. He was a great champion of the Jewish people – why would he suddenly call for their extermination?
- It also explains why Nehemiah 2:6 draws attention to the queen sitting beside Darius. That queen was Esther, who at that point had already defeated Haman and revealed herself as a Jew. Therefore, she was openly promoting the welfare of the Jews as the Jewish queen of Persia.

You would tie yourself in knots trying to connect every name in use in these Bible books to a different Persian king. The simplest explanation by far is that the seven weeks of Daniel 9 involved only two kings, Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great, each of whom had multiple titles in the Bible (and as James Jordan has pointed out,³² Cyrus was like David, in that he prepared the construction of the Temple, and Darius was like Solomon, in that he actually built it, then married a lot of women).

So, when exactly did Darius start and stop reigning? Well, in John 2:20, the Jews claim that it took 46 years to build the Second Temple. This does not appear to be related to Herod's enhancement of the Second Temple, so it must refer to its original construction under Cyrus and Darius.

The decree of Cyrus, the rebuilding of the altar, and the securing of building materials all happened in 3431, so this would be the beginning of the 46 years. In Ezra 4, the letter that went to Darius the Great in the year he became king was specifically phrased to get the king

³² <http://www.biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-horizons/no-80-rethinking-the-order-of-the-old-testament/>

to stop the Jews from rebuilding “the city and the walls” (Ezra 4:12-13), not the Temple.³³ However, the enemies of the Jews used his response to stop the Jews from working on the Temple until Darius’ second year (Ezra 4:23-24).

In the second year of Darius the Great, Haggai and Zechariah instructed Zerubbabel and Joshua to resume Temple construction again. This time, the Persian officials Tattenai and Shethar-Boznai and their companions (who were not listed amongst the adversaries of the Jews in Ezra 4) knew the Jews had been commanded to stop rebuilding the city and so asked them by what authority they were rebuilding the Temple. The Jews referenced the decree of Cyrus, so the officials sent an inquiry to Darius the Great, who found a record of Cyrus’ decree and wrote back, ordering the officials not to interfere with the Temple rebuilding efforts, but rather to support first its construction and then the regular activities of the restored Jewish worship system financially. This led to the completion of the Second Temple in the sixth year of Darius the Great (Ezra 6:15).

However, we know from secular history that there weren’t 46 years between the first year of Cyrus the Great and the sixth year of Darius the Great. According to James Jordan:³⁴

“After Cyrus took Babylon, he ruled for about 8 years. Following him was Cambyses, who ruled for about 8 years also... Darius followed Cambyses, after a brief time of chaos, and ruled 34 years...

Though we know little about the Persian empire, culture, and history, the chronology of the early emperors seems fairly well established. Cyrus was succeeded by his son Cambyses in 529 B.C. (I shall use conventional B.C. dates in this essay), who reigned for seven and a half years. Cambyses had apparently put his brother Smerdis to death in order to secure the throne, but upon Cambyses’ death, a certain "Smerdis" claimed the throne. Evidently this Pseudo-Smerdis was a Magian priest named Gomates or Gaumata. He reigned for half a year until being deposed by Darius.”

While secular history could be wrong, there is actually a better interpretation of the Bible that fits this timeline. In the letter Darius the Great sent with Ezra in Ezra 7, Darius supported efforts “to beautify the house of the LORD which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 7:27). Moreover, as already discussed, in the 12th year of Darius the Great (Esther 3:7), the

³³ The adversaries of the Jews thus deceived Darius by depicting something appropriate (Temple reconstruction) as an act of rebellion (rebuilding the city in order to resist Persian rule), much as Haman tricked Darius into ordering the extermination of the Jews by referring to them as an unnamed rebellious people (Esther 3:8-9).

³⁴ https://biblicalhorizons.com/biblical-chronology/8_05/

glorification of the Temple predicted by Haggai occurred. Therefore, the 46 years of John 2:20 included not just the reconstruction of the Temple, but its beautification.

When did the beautification end? The last event with a specific year recorded in this section of Scripture is the return of Nehemiah to Darius the Great in the king's 32nd year (Nehemiah 5:14; Nehemiah 13:6). It would make sense that Nehemiah would return when all Temple glorification efforts were complete, the worship system was restored, and the civil system was stable. Thus, the 32nd year of Darius the Great would be 3477, 46 years after 3431.

This means Darius the Great became king in 3445. Furthermore, if Darius reigned for 34 years, as Jordan has stated, then Darius the Great stopped reigning in 3479, the 49th year from the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great. This means the first seven weeks of Daniel 9 concerned Persian rule of Judah from Cyrus the Great to Darius the Great and were literally seven segments of seven years, or seven "Weeks of Years."³⁵

This means two additional things. First, the "roughly 8 years" of Cyrus, the "seven and a half years" of Cambyses, and the "half a year" of Pseudo-Smerdis must add up to 15 Biblical years, which is perfectly plausible, depending on the exact length of each segment and when in the calendar year they started and stopped.

Second, during the final two years of the reign of Darius the Great (after Nehemiah returned to Darius' service), the Jews transgressed against the covenant that Ezra and Nehemiah had helped re-establish. In fact, while it's not explicitly stated, if they sinned in 3479, that would mean they had two years of faithfulness (per the usual pattern), followed by a fall on a Sabbath year (also per the usual pattern), in this case the Sabbath of Sabbaths after their return from exile, much as the First Apostasy started in the Sabbath of Sabbaths after the Exodus.

We see an account of their various transgressions in Nehemiah 13. Moreover, Jesus tells us in Matthew 23:35 that the ancestors of the Jews murdered Zechariah the son of Berechiah between the Temple and the altar (this is also referenced in Luke 11:51, although Zechariah's parentage is not mentioned in that verse). While this event is not recorded in the Old Testament, we can reasonably infer that God sent Zechariah, who had previously led the Jews to resume construction of the Second Temple, to rebuke the Jews for their transgression after Nehemiah returned to Darius (or possibly after Nehemiah instituted his reforms in Nehemiah 13 and the Jews still sinned again), and they murdered the prophet instead of heeding him.

³⁵ Credit to Jordan for this idea, although my interpretation of the 70 Weeks of Years is different from his.

Sixty-Two Weeks of Intertestamental History and the Week of the Messiah

Calculations

3921: Jesus is crucified

If the first seven weeks of Daniel 9 were a literal 49 years, it stands to reason that the remaining 63 weeks must have been literal years as well. Gabriel said that the first 69 weeks out of 70 total would stretch from the decree of Cyrus to "Messiah the Prince" (Daniel 9:25), and "after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself" (Daniel 9:26). It is hard to read this as anything other than the crucifixion, when Jesus was executed, but not for his own sin (rather for ours).

If we pay careful attention to Gabriel's prophecy, we notice two things:

- There were "seven weeks and sixty-two weeks until Messiah the Prince", but the crucifixion comes "after the sixty-two weeks." The crucifixion could therefore only come immediately after the 62 weeks if the time period of the Messiah had no length of its own. Otherwise, there would be some time between the end of the 62 weeks and the crucifixion.
- The 70th week is not explained.

I posit that the crucifixion happening "after the sixty-two weeks" simply means "after the Messiah comes," as those two events are linked. How long after? After the 70th week. As we will see later, Jesus earthly ministry (including His time as a rabbi before His baptism) lasted for seven years, which was the 70th week. His crucifixion happened right at the beginning of the Biblical calendar year after the 70th week. That means the last full year of His ministry was 3920, 490 years after Cyrus became king, and the crucifixion happened right at the beginning of 3921.

Daniel 9:24 says that the 70 weeks would accomplish the following: "Finish the transgression, make an end of sins, make reconciliation for iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness, seal up vision and prophecy, and anoint the Most Holy." All of these happened when Jesus died and rose from the dead. The only questionable one is the sealing up of vision and prophecy, but as we will see later, John the Baptist was the final Old Covenant prophet before the coming of the kingdom of God and the beginning of the Last Days. Hebrews 1:1-2 says that "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son." Thus, while prophecy continued to exist after the resurrection (e.g., Acts 11:27-28), such

prophets prophesied by the power of the Son, which was different than how Old Covenant prophets prophesied.

Returning to the dating of the resurrection, as Christian scholars generally agree that Jesus was crucified somewhere in the early AD 30s, the decree of Cyrus had to have occurred around 460 BC. That's about 80 years later than modern secular historians place it. Therefore, the timeline I've constructed so far does not align with the extra-Biblical sources used by modern chronologers to understand the intertestamental period. I would simply ask: if my timeline is derived from the clear meaning of Scripture, which extra-Biblical source will we as Christians elevate as a higher authority for timekeeping than the Bible itself?

Still, how to explain the discrepancy? Well, current secular historical scholarship maintains that there were a number of Persian kings who came after Darius the Great prior to Alexander the Great conquering Persia. I strongly suspect that the apparent discrepancy between historical records and Scripture arises from the fact that all historical records about the supposed later kings of Persia are actually about Darius the Great.

In Daniel 11:2, in the third year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1), the angelic overlord of Persia tells Daniel, "Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than them all." The four kings were Cyrus the Great, Cambyses II, Pseudo-Smerdis, and Darius the Great, whose riches were put on display in Esther 1. Note that the angel does not mention any further kings after Darius the Great.

In modern scholarship, almost all the supposed later Persian kings after Darius the Great had names that were variations of the three titles used for him in the Bible (Darius, Ahasuerus/Xerxes, Artaxerxes), so it's possible there was confusion amongst ancient historians. What likely happened is that, given that rigorous historical methods were just being developed at the time and that the Greeks only used one name for each king, Greek historians might have mistakenly broken out different stories for one man who went by multiple names.

There are three pieces of evidence I've found that suggest that Alexander the Great defeated Darius the Great in his conquest of Persia:

- Daniel 8 depicts the kingdom of Media and Persia as a ram with two horns, one of which was higher and came up last. Because the reigns of Cambyses and Pseudo-Smerdis are largely inconsequential in the Bible narrative (neither king is even named in Scripture), these horns are Cyrus the Great and Darius the Great. Darius the Great was more glorious and richer than Cyrus, and he came up last in Persia. But the attack on the ram by the male goat that represents Greece does not hint at

any of the events that supposedly occurred in the 150 years between Darius the Great and Alexander the Great.

- The goat of Daniel 8 attacked the ram because it was “moved with rage” (Daniel 8:7). In Daniel 11:2-3, we get another perspective on this conflict, where the angel tells Daniel that the fourth king of Persia (i.e., Darius the Great) will “stir up all against the realm of Greece” (which would explain the goat’s rage), and then Alexander the Great will rule with great dominion (we know from verse 4 that Alexander is the “mighty king” of verse 3).

Nowhere in this narrative do we get a hint of what happened in the supposed 150-year interval between verse 2 and verse 3. This is especially problematic because so much detail is given in this very chapter about the history of the Seleucid Empire and Ptolemaic Kingdom that followed Alexander the Great that we’re still working on matching it all against our historical and archaeological records.

- 1 Maccabees 1:1 says, “After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated King Darius of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.)” 1 Maccabees is not inspired Scripture, but it is still an important Jewish historical record, and, importantly, it provides no qualifier for who the Darius defeated by Alexander the Great is. The simplest explanation is that this was the Darius who helped finish the Second Temple and whom every Jew reading the book would have been familiar with. Also, based on the entirety of 1 Maccabees, its writer was clearly trying to take up the mantle and continue the narrative of the historical books of the post-Exile restoration period, so why wouldn’t he provide more information about the massive century-and-a-half gap between Darius the Great and Alexander the Great?

The Bible therefore seems to be suggesting that the conquering of Persia by Alexander the Great happened around 410 BC, much earlier than the commonly accepted date of 330 BC. Considering that the dates given in 1 Maccabees conflict with the current mainstream timeline anyway, it’s not unreasonable to think that the mainstream timeline might be flawed.

It would take an open-minded expert in Persian, Greek, and Roman history to evaluate this possibility. While it might seem unlikely that so many historical experts could be so off base, in reality, if everyone entering this particular field of academic study begins with the assumption that there were more than four emperors in Media-Persia between Babylon and Greece, they will all be attempting to fit their research and discoveries into that paradigm. I suspect that once someone takes a step back and really attempts to fit all the puzzle pieces into the Biblical model, he or she will discover that they fit together quite well.

Commentary

Point 1

To understand the prophetic symbolism used in the Bible for the intertestamental period,³⁶ we must realize that God's grant of authority to Babylon in Jeremiah 27:5-7 started with Nebuchadnezzar and continued through the reign of his son (Evil-Merodach) and his son's son (Belshazzar), until Cyrus killed Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30-31), at which time the authority transitioned to Media/Persia.

In Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the metal image is about the time period ranging from the beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's rule through the coming of the Messiah and His replacement of the earthly empires with the spiritual kingdom of God. This time is called the "latter days" several times in the Bible (the "former days" being the days of the judges and the kings).

Many years later, in Belshazzar's first year as king, Daniel dreamt about four beasts (Daniel 7). His dreams were a confirmation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and the repetition calls to mind Joseph's explanation that "the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass" (Genesis 41:32).

Hence, the four metals are the same as the four beasts. By connecting them together, we can see how they foretell the four Gentile empires that would rule Israel prior to the coming of Jesus: Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece, and Rome. The four beasts are from the sea because oftentimes in Bible symbolism the earth represents Israel, while the sea (or seas) represents the Gentile nations.

The reason God consolidated global political power under the reigns of Gentile emperors was to prepare the Gentiles for Jesus' rule (in a spiritual sense, the torch of worldwide rule would pass smoothly from Rome to the Messianic king of kings). Israel had been ruled by God for almost a millennium in the Land of Canaan prior to the Exile, but the Gentiles hadn't been truly ruled by God since before the incident in Babel.

During the latter days, the Jews were given a special three-fold job:

- Serve as spiritual advisors to Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, and Darius, all of whom worshipped God under the direction of first Daniel, then Mordecai.
- Offer sacrifices for the Gentile emperors (and by extension the entire world) at the Second Temple.

³⁶ Credit to James Jordan, who published an audio cassette lecture series about the intertestamental period (including the metals of Daniel 2 and the beasts of Daniel 7), for helping me establish the groundwork for the ideas laid out here.

- Be missionaries in Gentile lands to teach them about the one true God. This was aided by the unique characteristics of an imperial system, such as peace amongst member nations, unrestricted travel throughout the empire's territory, and universal elements throughout the empire such as language, currency, high-level laws, etc. This global evangelism explains why the New Testament shows the Gentiles primed and ready for the saving message of a Jewish Messiah.

The reign of each beast [i.e., kingdom] started with the might of a particularly powerful king (Daniel 7:17).

Gold/Lion – Nebuchadnezzar and Babylon

The gold head of the statue and the lion with eagle's wings was Babylon, whose rule over Israel started with Nebuchadnezzar and lasted through the end of the 70 years of Babylonian domination. Note that the wings being plucked off and the beast becoming more like a man (Daniel 7:4) resemble the language of Nebuchadnezzar's conversion in Daniel 4:33-34.

Silver/Bear – Cyrus and Media/Persia

The chest and arms of silver and the bear raised up on one side with three ribs in its mouth was the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, whose rule started with Cyrus the Great and ran for 49 years. The raising up on one side probably had to do with an imbalance in power between Media and Persia, and the three ribs were probably the three kings of Babylon from the gold phase (Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, and Belshazzar – see Jeremiah 27:7). The devouring of much flesh is a fulfillment of Isaiah 13 and Jeremiah 51, which foretold the destruction of Babylon at the hands of the Medes (note that in the Book of Daniel, Cyrus is primarily referred to as "Darius the Mede").

Bronze/Leopard – Alexander and Greece

The belly and thighs of bronze and the leopard with four heads and four wings was Greece, whose rule started with Alexander the Great and lasted until the Maccabees achieved independence for the Hasmonean kingdom. Alexander notably engaged in extensive conquest (which explains the "ruling over all the earth" in Daniel 2:39). The leopard had four heads and four wings because the kingdom of Greece was broken up after his death and divided into pieces amongst his successors, called Diadochi. Amongst the pieces were four significant kingdoms/empires, which explains the four heads and the four wings and also the four winds of heaven in Daniel 11:4.

Because the goat of Daniel 8 is Greece, Alexander is the notable horn of Daniel 8:5, and the four main Diadochi (Ptolemy, Antigonos, Cassander, and Seleucus) are the four notable horns coming up toward the four winds of heaven that replaced him (Daniel 8:8).

In the flow of Daniel, Daniel 7 provides more detail about the prophecy of Daniel 2. Daniel 8, which was given in the third year of Belshazzar king of Babylon (Daniel 8:1), then provides a very high-level overview of one particularly important aspect of Greek rule over Israel, which was the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the subsequent revolt against him by the Maccabees, which led to the restoration of proper Temple worship that is celebrated on Hanukkah.

Daniel 8 gives some information about this conflict, but then Daniel is instructed to seal up the vision (Daniel 8:26), which is about the “time of the end” (Daniel 8:17). To properly understand this, we have to realize that the “time of the end” had two sections: the beginning of the time of the end and the end of the time of the end. The time of the end began with the persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes and ended with the time of judgment on Israel encompassing the Jewish-Roman wars.

Thus, Daniel 8, which is primarily about the beginning of the time of the end, was unsealed in Daniel 10-12 in the third year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1). Daniel 10 provides context for the prophecy, Daniel 11 provides much more detail on the conflict between Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees, and Daniel 12 provides a high-level overview of the end of the time of the end, which then gets sealed up like Daniel 8 did (Daniel 12:4). This vision gets unsealed in Revelation 5, by which time the events of the Hasmonean dynasty and the conquering of Israel by Rome had already happened, which is why neither Daniel nor Revelation records them.

Therefore, we can understand the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes by looking at Daniel 8 and Daniel 11 side-by-side. Daniel 11 references the “king of the North” and the “king of the South.” The North and the South were the two kingdoms that arose in the wake of Alexander’s death that most affected Israel: the Seleucid Empire was just north of it, and the Ptolemaic Kingdom was just south of it. Daniel 11:5ff records the events in those two kingdoms from the time of Ptolemy and Seleucus to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes (who was a Seleucid king and ruled in the North).

The brief reign of Heliodorus, who during his tenure as chancellor of Seleucus IV Philopator attempted to tax the Second Temple, is referenced in Daniel 11:20. The “vile person” of Daniel 11:21 is Antiochus Epiphanes, who deposed Heliodorus and took power through a deceptive arrangement that ignored the fact that he was not the rightful heir of Seleucus

Philopator, as described in the same verse. Antiochus is also the “little horn” of Daniel 8:9 and the “king with fierce features” in Daniel 8:23.

In 171 BC (according to the mainstream timeline), Antiochus deposed the high priest Jason and replaced him with a sympathetic high priest named Menelaus, which represented the beginning of Antiochus’ oppression of the Jews and eventual attempts to stamp out Jewish worship and the Second Temple sacrificial system. Jason is the prince of the covenant from Daniel 11:22, and his removal began the 2300 days of Daniel 8:13-14. The “league” of Daniel 11:23 is the “renegade covenant” of 1 Maccabees 1:11. The remainder of Daniel 11 describes the conflict between Antiochus and the faithful Jews up to Antiochus’ death, as documented from the remainder of 1 Maccabees 1 through 1 Maccabees 6:16.

Note that Antiochus was prophesied to be “broken without human means” in Daniel 8:25, and he “shall come to his end, and no one will help him” (Daniel 11:45). In 1 Maccabees 6, Antiochus is said to have died from his deep disappointment in failing to eradicate the Jewish religion.

1 Maccabees puts exactly three years from the setting up of the “desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering” and the offering of an abominable sacrifice on that “altar that was on top of the altar of burnt offering” (1 Maccabees 1:54-59) to the restoration of proper sacrifice (1 Maccabees 4:52-54). Assuming that the timeline of 1 Maccabees is accurate, to explain the 1290 days of Daniel 12:11 and the 1335 days of Daniel 12:12, I would posit that the 1290 days started with the initial defiling of the sanctuary in 1 Maccabees 1:27 and ended with the conquering of Jerusalem and the beginning of the process of cleansing the sanctuary in 1 Maccabees 4:42-43. I would also posit that the cleansing took 45 days, such that the 1335 days ended with the restoration of proper sacrifice in 1 Maccabees 4:52-53. The 2300 days of Daniel 8:14 would have ended with either the beginning or completion of the cleansing process (probably the beginning, based on the language).

Note: When the Maccabees cleansed the sanctuary and restored Second Temple Judaism, they created a new altar of burnt offering and new holy vessels (1 Maccabees 4:44-51). God’s presence in the Old Covenant was tied closely to the holy vessels, which is why it matters that Nebuchadnezzar took the original holy vessels to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:7, 36:18), as this represented God moving to Babylon with the “good figs” of Jeremiah 24:5. When the Jews returned to Judea from exile, they took the holy vessels with them (Ezra 1:7-11).

Hence, the transition to a new set of holy vessels moved Israel into the “time of the end,” as referenced in Daniel 8:17, Daniel 8:19, and Daniel 11:40. This time period started with Antiochus stealing and/or defiling all the original holy vessels (1 Maccabees 1:20-24) and

also defiling the sanctuary (1 Maccabees 1:37). The “end of the time of the end” started with the First Jewish-Roman War, which resulted in the destruction of these new holy vessels in 70 AD (they were never replaced, having been superseded by the New Covenant – Hebrews 8:13). The end of the time of the end ended with the Third Jewish-Roman War, when the Jews were almost completely eradicated, lost their national sovereignty, and were banned from Jerusalem.

Iron / Terrifying Beast – Julius Caesar and Rome

After triumphing over Antiochus, the Maccabees established an independent kingdom (ruled by their descendants, the Hasmonean dynasty) that was originally semi-autonomous under Seleucid rule but later became fully independent. However, Daniel had prophesied that a fourth empire would rule Judea and that during that empire the Messiah would arise. This empire was Rome.

Rome conquered the Hasmonean kingdom in 63 BC, initially allowing the Hasmoneans to remain in power, but eventually setting Herod the Great over Judea in 37 BC. Rome was the iron legs and feet of Daniel 2 and the terrifying beast of Daniel 7. Even though Augustus was technically the first “emperor,” it was his great-uncle and adoptive father Julius Caesar who set the stage for the establishment of the Roman Empire and from whom the first five emperors traced their lineage. Therefore, he is the initial mighty king of Rome.

A couple notes:

- In Daniel 7, there is a break between the vision of the third beast and the vision of the fourth beast. This represents the break between the rule of Greece and the rule of Rome during the independent phase of the Hasmonean kingdom.
- The clay mixed with iron in the feet of the image in Daniel 2:33 was the Herodian dynasty. The iron strength of Rome was mixed with the clay weakness of the Herods: they were mingled together, yet did not adhere to one another (Daniel 2:42-43), as we can see in the hostility between Herod and Pilate in Luke 23:12.
- The iron kingdom of Daniel 2:40 would “break in pieces and crush all the other [kingdoms],” which is similar to the way the fourth beast was “devouring [with iron teeth], breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet” in Daniel 7:7.

As Daniel prophesied, Jesus the Messiah was born during the reign of the iron Roman Empire and the clay Herod the Great.

Point 2

Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead in 3921, the 80th Jubilee from creation. This is heavily symbolic, as the Jubilee was a proclamation of liberty (Leviticus 25:10), and Jesus

died to save us from our sins (Matthew 1:21), thereby setting His people free from the bondage of sin and the unbearable burden of the Mosaic Law (Acts 15:10). Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17), the liberty by which Christ has made us free (Galatians 5:1).

Moreover, in Luke 4:16-21, Jesus announced that He had fulfilled Isaiah 61:1-2, which involved bringing liberty to captives and proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord. The acceptable year of the Lord was 3921, when all those enslaved to sin were set free.

It is notable also that Jesus was crucified right after the end of a Sabbath year from creation, a Sabbath of Sabbaths, and He atoned for sin at the beginning of an eighth year, corresponding to how the pre-incarnate Jesus clothed Adam and Eve in sacrificial animal skins at the transition between the seventh day of creation and the eighth.

Lastly, this “eighth day” symbolism is reinforced by the fact that He was crucified on the 80th Jubilee. There seems to have been a symbolic progression of Jubilees from creation in the history of Israel, where important events occurred on or very near to each, as previously discussed. Note the pattern and the accompanying numerological symbolism:

- 50th Jubilee: The release of the Israelites from Egyptian captivity
 - The 50th Sabbath of Sabbaths (2450) was followed by 50 years³⁷ until the possession of the Promised Land in the Jubilee of 2500 (50x50), and then 50 Sabbaths later, Saul became king.
 - The number 5 is connected to Law: there are 5 books of Law (the Pentateuch/Torah), and the Ten Commandments are two sets of 5 commandments, one concerning God and one concerning man. Hence the Law was given in the cycle of the 50th Jubilee.
- 60th Jubilee: The year intended by God to be the first year of the First Temple worship system and therefore the intended ending of the oppressions experienced by Israel during the cycle of the judges
 - The First Temple was completed on the 60th Sabbath of Sabbaths (2940), which was followed by 60 missed Sabbaths that ended with the beginning of the 70 years of Babylonian domination.
 - The number 6 is connected to man, because man was created on the sixth day. Man’s sin means the number 6 is not used positively in most of the Bible, which is why there was such failure connected to the 60th Jubilee.
- 70th Jubilee: The return from Exile
 - The 70 years of Babylonian domination ended with the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus in the 70th Sabbath of Sabbaths (3430), with the return from Exile

³⁷ See Leviticus 25:8-12.

being granted on the 70th Jubilee, which was then followed by 70 Weeks of Years.

- The number 7 is connected to both God's rest and man's covenant failure (which occurred on the seventh day of creation). Interestingly, some of the prophets (especially Jeremiah) seemed to suggest that the ultimate fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy would occur right after the Exile, only for Daniel to discover that an additional 490 years had to happen first. This suggests that the failure of the Jews to embrace the freedom provided them by Cyrus the Messiah and finally turn with their whole heart back to the LORD represented a typical Sabbath failure, necessitating salvation to be provided by Jesus on the "eighth day" (80th Jubilee).
- 80th Jubilee: The resurrection of Jesus
 - The 80th Jubilee from creation was the last Jubilee in the time period of the Old Covenant, as the Second Temple was destroyed less than 50 years after Jesus' resurrection. After Christ's sacrifice, no further Jubilees were required.
 - The number 8 is connected to God's salvation. God made His original promise of a savior and covered Adam and Eve in animal skins, foreshadowing Jesus' sacrifice, on the eighth day of creation, which is therefore the day God saves man from his failure. Hence, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection occurred on the 80th Jubilee.

The Life of Jesus

Note: As we move into connecting the Gregorian calendar to the Biblical calendar, we must account for the fact that the Gregorian year runs from winter to winter, while the Biblical year runs from spring to spring. Therefore, a Biblical year would run, for example, from spring of 29 AD to spring of 30 AD. This means that two events that occur in the same year as recorded today might be happening in two different Biblical years, while, conversely, the Biblical difference between two modern years would depend on which month the events in them took place.

I will break the Gregorian year into four quarters: Q1 will be January through March, Q2 will be April through June, Q3 will be July through September, and Q4 will be October through December. For convenience, I will refer to Q1 as happening at the end of one Biblical year and Q2 as happening at the beginning of the next, even though sometimes a Biblical year ends in March.

Passover always happens just after the beginning of a Biblical year (as seen in Exodus 12). If someone wished to drill down into the exact day of the exact Gregorian month that Passover happened in a particular year in the life of Jesus, this method of breaking down years would need to be refined.

Note: During the Babylonian domination, the Jews adopted the Babylonian name for the first month of the Hebrew calendar year, “Nisan” (Esther 3:7). I will therefore use the name “Nisan” from this point forward to refer to the Hebrew month “Abib,” which was previously the designation for the first month.

Calculations

3918 / 29 AD – 30 AD: John the Baptist begins his ministry

3918 / 30 AD (Q1): Jesus is baptized

3918 / 30 AD (Q1): Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness while being tempted by Satan

3918 / 30 AD (Q1): Jesus renames Simon to Peter

3918 / 30 AD (Q1): Jesus calls Philip

3918 / 30 AD (Q1): Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana

3919 / 30 AD (Nisan): Jesus cleanses the Temple for the first time

3919 / 30 AD – 31 AD: Jesus ministers in Judea while John continues baptizing

3919 / 30 AD – 31 AD: John is imprisoned

3919 / 30 AD – 31 AD: Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee

3919 / 30 AD – 31 AD: Jesus calls Simon, Andrew, James, and John

3919 / 30 AD – 31 AD: Jesus chooses the twelve apostles

3920 / 31 AD – 32 AD: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead

3921 / 32 AD (Nisan): Jesus is anointed

3921 / 32 AD (Nisan): Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly

3921 / 32 AD (Nisan): Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time

3921 / 32 AD (Nisan): Jesus is crucified

3921 / 32 AD (Nisan): Jesus rises from the dead

The Gospels have to be carefully compared to each other to construct the exact sequence of events during Jesus' ministry. Particularly helpful are Luke's decision to put the events he recounts in sequential order, according to Luke 1:1-4 (as opposed to, say, Matthew, who might follow the Jewish pattern of recounting a sequence of events, then returning to an earlier event to fill in more detail), and John's mentions of Jewish feasts (especially Passover) throughout his Gospel.

John the Baptist's first ministry ground was the region around the Jordan (Luke 3:3), which led to Jews from around Judea coming to be baptized in the Jordan. Jesus was also baptized, and immediately Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days (Mark 1:12). The three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) all then move quickly to Jesus' ministry in Galilee after John the Baptist was imprisoned, but the Gospel of John does not. Instead, we see some events that occurred before John's imprisonment.

First, the interrogation of John by the emissaries of the Pharisees occurred just as Jesus was returning from the 40 days in wilderness, for Jesus came by where John was the next day, and John proclaimed Jesus the Son of God (John 1:29).

Jesus then called Philip as a disciple and renamed Simon to Peter, but this was not when Jesus called Peter and Andrew; instead, Matthew and Mark both put the calling of Peter and Andrew and James and John after the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Matthew 4:12, 18-22; Mark 1:14-20).

A few days after Jesus returned from His temptation, He went to the wedding in Cana (John 2:1), then went down to Capernaum, stayed there a short while (John 2:12), and then went up to Jerusalem for the Passover. With travel time included, this means the wedding must have happened right at the end of the Biblical year before the first Passover recorded in the

Gospel of John (John 2:13). This also means Jesus' baptism and 40 days of temptation happened relatively late in the Biblical year, in Q1 of the Gregorian year.

During that first Passover (which would have happened just after the beginning of the next Biblical year, in Nisan/Q2 of the same Gregorian year), Jesus cleansed the Temple for the first time. We then see in John 3:22-24 that after that Passover, Jesus began His ministry in Judea, not Galilee, before John was imprisoned (John was baptizing in Aenon near Salim).

Jesus traveled to Galilee via Samaria in John 4. John 4:44 mentions Jesus testifying that "a prophet has no honor in his own country," which is most likely a reference to His initial rejection by Nazareth and relocation to Capernaum as described in Luke 4:16-30 (briefly referenced also in Matthew 4:13). John 4:54 indicates that this represented a shift in Jesus' ministry from Judea to Galilee, so it was in the same Biblical year as the first cleansing of the Temple that John was imprisoned and that Jesus shifted his focus to Galilee (because this all happened before John recorded a second Passover).

Note: The rejection of Jesus at Nazareth in Mark 6:1-6 was probably a second rejection He experienced after visiting Nazareth again once His ministry in Galilee had been underway for a while. This second time His townsfolk did not attempt to murder Him but were still offended at Him.

John 5 mentions a later feast of that Biblical year, and then John 6:4 mentions a second Passover. Around the time of that Passover, most of Jesus' disciples abandoned Him, but the twelve did not (John 6:66-70). This means Jesus had already called all the twelve and named them apostles (Luke 6:13) before the end of that first full Biblical year.

The remainder of Jesus' ministry would have occurred in the Biblical year following that second Passover. The resurrection of Lazarus would have happened toward the end of that year, and then Mary the sister of Lazarus anointed Jesus with spikenard six days before the third recorded Passover (John 11:55; 12:1). Because the Passover was observed on the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan/Abib (Leviticus 23:5), Mary would have anointed Jesus shortly after the beginning of the Biblical year of Jesus' crucifixion. The triumphal entry, the second cleansing of the Temple, the crucifixion, and the resurrection all would have occurred right after the anointing.

Because we've already determined that Jesus was crucified in 3921, we can determine that He was baptized in late 3918 and connect the Biblical years to these events accordingly. But how do we know which Gregorian year this happened in?

Well, Luke 3:1 says that John began preaching in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius became emperor in August of 14 AD, which would be in the middle of the Jewish year

running from spring of 14 AD to spring of 15 AD. Therefore, John the Baptist began preaching somewhere between spring of 29 AD and spring of 30 AD.

We have already established that Jesus was baptized very shortly before the end of a Biblical year. If we assume that Jesus was baptized the same Biblical year John the Baptist began preaching, we can conclude He must have been baptized very early in 30 AD. Therefore, John would probably have begun preaching in Q3 or Q4 of 29 AD, and Jesus would have been crucified right after Passover in 32 AD.

Note: While it is theoretically possible that Jesus could have been baptized at the beginning of 31 AD (especially if John started preaching in early 30 AD) or even a later year, the narrative doesn't support the idea that John spent that long preaching around the Jordan. We know that John was planning to move around to other locations, so he wouldn't want to spend almost a year in one location, and it doesn't make sense that he would be preaching to people to come to a baptism that wasn't scheduled for another nine or ten months.

Furthermore, there is no chronological data anywhere that illustrates a gap (on the contrary, the lack of any clarifying data about years between the start of John's ministry and the baptism of Jesus implies they occurred in the same Biblical year). The idea that John preached for a few months in 29 AD, did a mass baptism (culminating with Jesus being baptized), and then moved on to the next location makes the most sense.

Finally, it doesn't make sense that it would take more than a year for the Jews to send emissaries to John to ask about his baptism. A few months would be the right length of time for John's preaching to gain momentum, for the Jews to hear about John's preaching and decide what to do about it, and for the emissaries to reach him.

3884 / 6 BC (Nisan): Jesus is born

3884 / 6 BC (December): The wise men visit Jesus

According to The Conversation's analysis of the astrological information in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus was born on April 17 of 6 BC (which was shortly after Passover and therefore right at the beginning of the Biblical year that ran from 6 BC to 5 BC), while the star in the east stood over Jesus' home on December 19 of 6 BC.³⁸ Jesus would have therefore been eight months old when the wise men visited Him.

Given the lack of any form of telecommunication in that day, it would have been at least a few weeks, possibly a month or two, before Herod decided that he had been for sure deceived by the wise men, instead of them simply being delayed in returning. Jesus would

³⁸ <http://theconversation.com/can-astronomy-explain-the-biblical-star-of-bethlehem-35126>

therefore have almost crossed His first Jewish New Year line when Herod decided to massacre the male children in the region of Bethlehem. Given that that process would have taken a few weeks at the very least, Herod decided to slaughter any child under the age of two (Matthew 2:16), just to make sure Jesus wouldn't escape if He happened to turn one year old while the slaughter was underway.

Note: Both Matthew 2 and Luke 1 put Jesus' birth during the reign of Herod the Great, who died in 4 BC, while Luke 2 seems to put the birth of Jesus during the census of Quirinius, which happened in 6 AD. I am satisfied with the explanation put forward by David Armitage,³⁹ which holds that Luke 2:1-5 is a narrative digression establishing why Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

In his analysis, he demonstrates that this passage does *not* claim that Jesus was born during the census, but rather that during the days John the Baptist was growing up, in 6 AD, Joseph went with Mary, the woman who had previously birthed her firstborn while she was his betrothed, to Bethlehem, the same place where Jesus was born and placed in a manger during the days of Herod. According to him, Luke 1:80-2:7 should be translated as below (note that the author argues that Jesus was not born in a commercial inn, but rather in a temporary living space made for Joseph and Mary in the private residence of some of Joseph's relatives):

"The child grew and was strengthened in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel. As it happens, it was during that time that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the Roman world (this was the first registration, when Quirinius was governor of Syria), and everyone went – each into their own town – to be registered. Joseph also went up: out of Galilee, away from the town of Nazareth, into Judea, to David's town (which is called Bethlehem) because he was from the house and family of David; he went to be registered with Mary (she who was his betrothed when she was pregnant). Now, it transpired that the days were completed for her to give birth when they were in that place, and she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a feeding trough, because there was insufficient space for them in their lodging place."

Taking Armitage's explanation into account (especially his argument that Jesus was born in the home of some of Joseph's relatives, not a commercial inn), I believe we can reconstruct the circumstances of Jesus' conception and early years fairly accurately:

1. Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth (Luke 2:39) and got betrothed there.

³⁹ <https://www.tyndalebulletin.org/article/27652-detaching-the-census-an-alternative-reading-of-luke-2-1-7>

2. Because Nazareth was a backwater town (as Nathanael said in John 1:46, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”), Joseph wanted to plant his new family in Bethlehem, a more prosperous and reputable town, where he also had relatives and therefore a support system. He thus went to Bethlehem after the betrothal to build a home for them (possibly on the property of his relatives). While building, he was staying in a small room (“accommodation”) in the house of his relatives, which was connected to the living area for the animals.
3. While Joseph was in Bethlehem, Mary became pregnant. She quickly (Luke 1:39) went to stay with her relative Elizabeth (Luke 1:36), who was six months pregnant with John the Baptist (Luke 1:26; Luke 1:36), to conceal her pregnancy from her friends and neighbors. She stayed with Elizabeth three months (Luke 1:56), at which time John would have been born and Mary would have found it rude to stay any longer, so she went home.
4. By then, Mary would have been showing, and everyone would know she was pregnant. Word of this would reach Joseph in Bethlehem, at which point, figuring that she had cheated on him in his absence, he decided to divorce her (Matthew 1:18-19). However, an angel told him she had not been unfaithful to him, so he decided to stay betrothed to her (Matthew 1:20-24). This would have led to rumors amongst the Nazarenes that either the couple had had premarital sex before Joseph left to go to Bethlehem (or during a trip home to Nazareth) or that Mary had cheated on Joseph while he was away building a home for her.
5. Joseph probably took Mary to Bethlehem as she was nearing full term, since he was close to completing the new family home and wanted her settled in Bethlehem when the baby came. He probably figured he had enough time to complete the home before she gave birth, but he was wrong. She ended up birthing Jesus while they were staying in Joseph’s temporary accommodation, which was so small that they had to put Jesus in a manger in the animal area when He was born (Luke 2:7).
6. With Jesus born, Joseph had no choice but to slow down or stop work on the family home and help take care of the baby, especially because they were stranded in his temporary accommodation during Mary’s uncleanness. They circumcised Jesus on the eighth day, waited until 40 days after His birth (Luke 2:22-24; see Leviticus 12:1-4), then went to Jerusalem to present their son to the Lord and offer the appropriate sacrifice.
7. Joseph apparently decided that it would be easier if Mary was situated in Nazareth while he finished the family home, so they went back to Nazareth (Luke 2:39).
8. Joseph then returned to Bethlehem, finished the family house, and moved Mary and Jesus to Bethlehem.
9. When Jesus was eight months old, the wise men visited them in Bethlehem, at their “house” (Matthew 2:11). When they left, an angel told Joseph to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt, which he did (Matthew 2:13-14). Even though they were poor, the gifts of the wise men would have enabled them to survive while sojourning in Egypt.

10. After Herod's death, Joseph intended to take his family back to Bethlehem, but because of his fear of Herod's son Archelaus, he took them to their original hometown of Nazareth instead (Matthew 2:22-23). This would have been very difficult for them, as not only was Nazareth a poor place with minimal economic opportunities, but the rumor mill had no doubt been spinning in their absence about the circumstances of Jesus' birth.
11. Joseph visited Bethlehem with Mary in 6 AD to be registered during the census of Quirinius.

3896 / 7 AD (Nisan): Jesus astonishes the teachers in the Temple (Luke 2:41-42)

3914 / 25 – 26 AD: Jesus becomes a rabbi

According to Luke 3:23, Jesus was "about thirty years of age" when He "began." This beginning, however, could not possibly have been His baptism or the beginning of His miraculous ministry. After all, Herod died in 4 BC, so even if you don't accept The Conversation's astrological analysis, we know Jesus couldn't have been born later than 5 BC at the latest. As already stated, the earliest John the Baptist could have begun preaching was in 29 AD, so that's a stretch of at least 33 years.

A better explanation is that Jesus became a rabbi when He was thirty (I will discuss the "about" in a later section). We know from John 1:38 that Jesus was already a rabbi when He was baptized and was apparently pretty well known. The readiness with which the apostles abandoned their livelihoods and jumped at the chance to be His disciples suggests that He had been a rabbi for a while and had probably created a longing within many of the faithful Jews around Him to be called by Him.

If Jesus was indeed born right at the beginning of the year that spanned from 6 BC to 5 BC, that year would be 3884, and He would have become a rabbi in 3914, which spanned from 25 AD to 26 AD. Thus, Jesus was in his mid-thirties during the years of his miraculous ministry, finally dying and rising from the dead at the age of 37.

This makes sense of John 8:57, when the Jews say to Jesus, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" If Jesus was close to 40, such that the Jews, who didn't know exactly how old He was, knew that He could be slightly under or slightly over 40, them saying He was not yet 50 would be appropriate. If He was in his early 30s, they would have said, "You are not yet forty years old."

Note that the seven years encompassing 3914 to 3920 were the 70th Week of Years of Daniel 9.

Commentary

In the parable of the barren fig tree in Luke 13:6-9, the owner of a fig tree laments that he has been seeking fruit from a fig tree for three years and wants to cut it down. However, the keeper of his vineyard wants to keep nourishing it for the third year, then check on it after the year is over. This parable matches Jesus' miraculous ministry: Jesus was searching for fruit from Israel from 3918 to 3920, then waited until 3921, at which point, just before being crucified, He saw a fig tree bearing no fruit and cursed it (Matthew 21:18-19), thereby declaring that Israel the nation was unfruitful and was to be replaced by the Church.

This matches Luke 13:31-33, where Jesus says, "Go, tell that fox [Herod], 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.' Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem." Jesus seems to have said this in His first full year of ministry, 3919, in which case, "today" was 3919, "tomorrow" was 3920, and the "third day / day following" would be 3921, when He was perfected.

The Last Days and the First Jewish-Roman War

Calculations

3919 / 30 AD (Nisan): The Last Days begin

3955 / 66 AD (Q2): The abomination of desolation occurs when the Jews stop offering sacrifices for the Roman emperor

3955 / 66 AD (Q2): The First Jewish-Roman War begins

3955 / 67 AD (Q1): Vespasian takes over the Roman invasion of Judea

3958 / 69 AD (Q3): Titus takes over the Roman invasion of Judea

3958 / 69 AD (Q4): Vespasian becomes emperor

3959 / 70 AD (Nisan): Titus besieges Jerusalem

3959 / 70 AD (Nisan): Jesus returns

3959 / 70 AD (Nisan): The rapture and the first resurrection occur

3959 / 70 AD (Nisan): The Last Days end

3959 / 70 AD (Q3): The Romans successfully sack Jerusalem and destroy the Second Temple

3962: The siege of Masada ends

3962: The First Jewish-Roman War ends

There is a major eschatological tension in the Bible that I believe I may have found a way to resolve⁴⁰: namely, the Second Coming / Return of Christ clearly was anticipated by the first-century Church to be about to happen in their near future (see Appendix A for proof of this), but the end time events described in Revelation 20 are clearly in our future.

The simplest solution, which I'm not sure I've ever seen anyone advocate (I've read some materials of Jordan's that come close, but I don't recall him using this exact approach), is to completely split them. To make a complete split work, we have to realize that the New Testament actually references three resurrections from the dead, not two.

⁴⁰ I credit Ed Stevens (a full preterist) for raising questions that caused me to challenge certain tenets of mainstream partial preterism. I also used certain ideas from James Jordan to answer those questions in a way that made sense and was still able to properly explain the current situation of mankind.

The first resurrection is described in Matthew 25:31-46. According to this passage, “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.” This sounds like the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15, but if you look closely at the description of the judgment of the sheep and goats, it appears to be of those who knew who Jesus was and is based on how they specifically treated members of the Church (Matthew 25:40).

Furthermore, the context of this passage is very telling. In Matthew 24:1-35, Jesus describes the end time events leading up to the destruction of the Temple. The “end of the age” in Matthew 24:3 refers to the end of the age of the Old Covenant, when the “heavens and the earth” that existed at the time (i.e., Second Temple Judaism and its elements, such as the Second Temple, the lampstand, the tables, the Sea, the priestly vestments, etc.) would be destroyed by fire in the day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 3:10). And indeed, this was fulfilled when Jerusalem and the Second Temple were burned by the Romans in 70 AD. At that time, the jots and tittles of the Mosaic Law passed away (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17).

Starting in Matthew 24:36, Jesus then transitions to the implications of His return for his followers. He speaks about being ready like the master of a house protecting against a thief (Matthew 24:36-44), about faithful servants vs. evil servants (Matthew 24:45-51), about wise vs. foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), and about good and faithful servants vs. wicked and lazy servants (Matthew 25:14-30). All of these are about one theme: Jesus’ faithful followers needed to spend their time and gifts wisely and pursue holiness while waiting for Jesus’ return, while the false followers of Jesus would indulge themselves in sinfulness and abuse of true Christians, because they didn’t fear the judgment of the Son of Man (as warned of in Luke 21:34). Note: There are other parables in the Gospels about this same theme, such as the wheat vs. the tares (Matthew 13:24-30) and the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-50).

Many letters in the New Testament included warnings from the apostles to Christians to persevere in faithfulness until the Second Coming. As the Second Coming drew near, many Christians became skeptical that Jesus would return and fell away, pursuing their own fleshly desires (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Jude 1, 2 Peter 2-3). Those who pursued the love of the world and denied Jesus in the last hour were antichrists (1 John 2:18-19).

Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that the resurrection that occurred with Jesus’ Second Coming was limited exclusively to the first-century Church. All those who claimed to follow Jesus were either raptured or resurrected, at which point the truly righteous went to heaven, while the wicked went to Hell.

The Covenant-Confirming Week of Daniel 9

After the introductory section of chapters 1-3, the Book of Revelation covers three topics:

- The covenant-confirming week of Daniel 9 and the First Jewish-Roman War (Revelation 4-11)
- God's witness to and then final judgment of Israel (Revelation 12-19)
- The Church Age and the New Heavens and the New Earth (Revelation 20-22)

As previously mentioned, Revelation 5 unseals the scroll that was sealed up at the end of Daniel, finally revealing details about the end times that were only hinted at in Daniel 2, 7, and 12.

To time the Second Coming properly, we have to revisit the Book of Daniel and connect it to the Book of Revelation. In Daniel 9:26-27, Gabriel mentions a "covenant-confirming" week that comes after the 70 Weeks of Years. We can only understand these two verses properly if we realize that it is the Messiah who is "confirming the covenant with many for one week," not the prince who is to come.

This week, which was associated with a war, desolations, the destruction of the city and the sanctuary, and the end of the sacrifice and offering, occurred during the First Jewish-Roman War. This war confirmed the New Covenant made with the first-century Church in several ways:

- It rescued (via rapture) Christians who were being persecuted.
- It resurrected Christians who had died, just as Jesus promised them.
- It brought judgment on the faithless Jews who murdered Jesus and had been persecuting Christians after His ascension.
- It destroyed the Second Temple worship system, proving the New Covenant was sufficient to stand on its own.
- It ended the Roman emperor's special role as spiritual king of kings, replacing him with Jesus as the Messianic King of kings.

The Second Abomination of Desolation

Daniel 9:26-27 mentions desolations associated with the war. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the inciting event for the First Jewish-Roman War was when the Jewish rebels ceased offering sacrifices on behalf of the Roman emperor in 66 AD. This was the abomination of desolation Jesus referenced in Matthew 24:15 and Mark 13:14. The reason both verses say "let the reader understand" is that this second abomination of desolation was not what most first-century Jews were expecting.

Most Jews at the time expected a repeat of the events of the Maccabean Revolt (which was initiated by the first abomination of desolation, when the forces of Antiochus Epiphanes erected a desolating sacrifice on the Jewish altar), in which the fourth empire would be the villain and the Jews would heroically overthrow them and establish independence once and for all under the earthly rule of a Messianic king.

Jesus, however, never challenged the legitimacy of Roman rule during His ministry, because Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 declared that the authority God had given Babylon in Jeremiah 27:4-6 was passed down to Rome by the will of God. Instead, He knew that Second Temple Judaism was set up in such a way that the Jews would be a priestly people for the entire world by offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the emperor (and by extension his empire), which was required by Darius the Great as his main motivator for assisting the Jews in finishing the Second Temple (Ezra 6:9-10). Because of this special job, the Jews were allowed (except under Antiochus Epiphanes) to maintain their own system of worship that didn't acknowledge the divinity of the emperor or his gods, and they also were free to travel throughout the empire to spread Yahweh worship to Gentiles of all nations.

Unfortunately, by the time of Jesus many Jews had lost sight of this mission, coming to see Gentiles as unclean to the point that even Christian Jews were scandalized when Peter witnessed to Cornelius (Acts 11:2-3). Most Jews saw their Gentile overlords as a burden and couldn't wait to overthrow them. But Jesus warned them that to do so was to risk removing the necessity of the Jewish nation in the first place.

And indeed, the first-century Christians worshipped in the temple while it was still being used for its original intended purpose (Luke 24:52-53). But once the Jews abandoned their divine mission altogether by stopping the sacrifices on behalf of Caesar, and the Romans responded with an invasion, Christian Jews would have recognized that the time had come for Jerusalem's desolation and would have followed Jesus' warning to flee immediately (Matthew 24:15-21; Mark 13:14-19; Luke 21:20-24).

Because the faithless Jews left in Judah did not understand that Daniel 7:21-27 represented a shift from earthly Jews to faithful followers of Jesus and from an earthly kingdom to a spiritual one (recall Jesus saying that His kingdom "is not of this world" in John 18:36), they incorrectly thought this passage called them to fight the Romans for national independence, which ultimately resulted in their destruction.

The Week Within the War

Much like the construction of the First Temple, the First Jewish-Roman War began on a Sabbath year (3955 / May of 66 AD) and lasted until the following Sabbath year (3962 / 73-74 AD). However, while the war began in 66 AD, two very important things happened the

following Gregorian year, just before the first year of the cycle of Sabbath years that began in 3955: the Roman general Vespasian assumed control of Roman war efforts, while the Jewish rebels established a provisional government with Jerusalem as the capital city.

In Daniel 7, we see that the Messianic kingdom would be established in the time of the king of Rome who was eleventh in line from the Roman king who would first gain dominion over the whole world. Julius Caesar was the mighty king of Rome who helped transition Rome into an empire that controlled most of the nations known to Israel. He also appointed Herod's father to be procurator of Judea, which led to the Herodian dynasty being in place during the life of Jesus.

If you count Mark Antony as a horn, or if you assume that Vespasian was both the tenth king from Julius Caesar and the eleventh (as a general manning the war effort against Israel who "came up among" the ten horns – Daniel 7:8), then Vespasian was the final horn speaking pompous words. He "subdued three kings" (Daniel 7:24), in that he triumphed as emperor in the Year of the Four Emperors (69 AD), when three kings ruled briefly in quick succession before him.

By arrogating to himself the right to invade Israel and eventually to destroy the Jewish religious system, Vespasian was speaking pompous words against the Most High, persecuting the saints of the Most High, and intending to change times and law (Daniel 7:25). His persecution lasted for a time and times and half a time (Daniel 7:25), i.e., for a year plus two years plus half a year, or 3.5 years. This could also be expressed as 42 months or, assuming 30 days per month, 1260 days.

Revelation 6-11 describes the massacring of Israel under Vespasian from his appointment as general over the war effort in early AD 67 until the burning of the temple in August of AD 70 (3.5 years). During this persecution, which was brought about by God because of the apostasy and wickedness of the Jews and their rejection of Jesus as Messiah, God provided two witnesses to prophesy constantly in Jerusalem (which was under the control of a provisional Judean rebel government for the same 3.5 years), so as to make sure the Jews understood their judgment and also to give them one last chance to repent before they were utterly destroyed. These witnesses prophesied for 1260 days, the 42 months the Gentiles (Romans under Vespasian) trampled the holy city, before being killed and then called up to heaven (Revelation 11:1-14).

In July of 69 AD, certain parts of the Roman army declared Vespasian emperor, and he left the war effort against the Jewish Rebellion in the hands of his son Titus to go claim power, finally becoming emperor in December of 69 AD.

Titus besieged Jerusalem in Nisan of AD 70, just as Jerusalem was full of Jews preparing to observe the Passover. In this way, the vast majority of the Jews who rejected Jesus and the gospel were trapped in Jerusalem for the horror of the siege itself (famine and pestilence) and the murder or enslavement (sword or captivity) of the survivors when the siege finally ended.

Just before the end of the siege, after 42 months of provisional self-rule and war with Vespasian and Titus, the Jews in Jerusalem believed themselves to be on the cusp of divine deliverance (because of their misreading of Daniel 7), only to be met with absolute devastation. Note: the insanity and immorality of what was happening inside Jerusalem during the war served as a witness the entire time against their heretical interpretation of Scripture.

When the Romans finally succeeded in sacking Jerusalem, halfway through the seven-year period that started with the appointment of Vespasian as head of the war effort and the establishment of the provisional Jewish government, they burned the Second Temple, “bringing an end to sacrifice and offering in the middle of the week” (Daniel 9:27).

After sacking Jerusalem, Titus spent the remainder of the war mopping up Jewish resistance across Judea, finishing with the siege of Masada in 3962 (sometime in 73 or 74 AD).

The Last Days

As we’ve already established, Jesus cleansed the temple for the first time in Nisan of AD 30 (3919). In so doing, He was symbolically performing the first removal of stones, scraping, and plastering of a house infected with a leprous plague (Leviticus 14:33-53). He then returned for a follow-up inspection two years later, in Nisan of AD 32, at which point, it was clear the plague had returned, and so He determined that the temple would need to be dismantled (as described in Leviticus 14:45).

38 years after His second inspection (immediately after which He was crucified), in Nisan of 70 AD, He returned in judgment on Israel (the Second Coming) to destroy the temple and cleanse the leprosy. Once He returned, He oversaw the siege and torment of the faithless Jews as spiritual overseer of Titus’ army.

In the spiritual realm, when the siege began, the seventh and final trumpet of Revelation sounded in heaven, and Jesus began to reign over the kingdoms of the world (Revelation 11:15; cp. Jesus sitting on the throne of his glory in Matthew 25:31). This is when the still-living Christians were caught up to heaven to judge Israel with Him (Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27), an event referred to today as “the rapture.” This event was repeatedly associated with the sounding of a trumpet or the “last trumpet,” as seen in Matthew 24:31, 1

Corinthians 15:51-52, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (note that those who had died in Christ would be resurrected first and then joined in the air by the raptured Christians).

This was also the moment when the “saints of the Most High” of Daniel 7:22 and Daniel 7:27 took over the kingdom. Those saints were Christians, the Jews of the heavenly Israel (Romans 2:28-29), who took over from the previous saints of the Most High of Daniel 7:21 and Daniel 7:25, the Jews of the earthly Israel.

Daniel 12:2-3 predicted that after the first resurrection, when true Christians would awake to everlasting life but false Christians to shame and everlasting contempt, “those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.” Jesus confirmed this would happen with His Second Coming, at the time of the rapture (Matthew 13:40-43). Paul confirmed that Christians were already shining and would thereby affirm his hard work on the day of Christ (Philippians 2:14-16).

In Daniel 12:1, “Michael” is a reference to Jesus, probably his angelic title as archangel (Jude 1:9), referred to as “the Angel of the Lord” multiple times in the Old Testament, i.e., the one who commands the angelic armies of heaven (Matthew 26:53). He is described as “the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people.” Note that in Revelation 4-5, we see that God is on a throne but is a separate entity from the Lamb (see especially Revelation 5:7). The God on the throne is God the Father, who in the New Heavens and the New Earth shares His throne with the Lamb (Revelation 22:1; Revelation 22:3). Thus, when Daniel was written, Jesus was a heavenly prince, who now co-reigns in heaven with His Father.

In Daniel 7:9-14, God the Father is described as “the ancient of Days,” while Jesus is “the Son of Man.” In this scene (which is also referenced in Daniel 2:34-35 and Daniel 2:44-45), the Father takes the spiritual authority of Rome under Vespasian and gives it to Jesus and the Church (even though Rome still continued to exist and rule on earth, its divine mandate over the nations was gone from then on). All of this happened in Nisan of 70 AD. Note: The description of the Ancient of Days in Daniel 7:9 is similar to that of the Son of Man in Revelation 1:12-16 because “he who has seen [Jesus] has seen the Father” (John 14:9), because Jesus is the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).

Jesus promised His apostles that when He returned, they would sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28 and Luke 22:30). These are the thrones of Daniel 7:9. The tribes (the Jews who had been gathered from the nations and trapped in Jerusalem during the siege) would mourn at the coming of the Son of Man (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 1:7), because it represented their final destruction and the failure of their

nationalistic hopes. During His return, Jesus came on the clouds (Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:11), in the lifetime of those who murdered Him (Revelation 1:7), as He promised the Sanhedrin when He was on trial (Matthew 26:64).

Indeed, as Daniel 9:26 foretold, the “people of the prince who is to come,” AKA the Romans under Titus (who was literally a Roman prince once Vespasian became king), destroyed the city (Jerusalem) and the sanctuary (the Second Temple). That verse also mentions that the end of the city and the sanctuary would be “with a flood”; note that Jesus compared His return to the Flood of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39).

Therefore, the precisely 40 years from Jesus’ first cleansing of the Temple to the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem were the “Last Days” of the Old Covenant and Second Temple Judaism. Per the usual pattern, those 40 years were divided into two years and thirty-eight years by the second cleansing of the temple (the 38 years being alluded to in John 5:5).

The idea of the Last Days being 40 years is reinforced by Jesus’ statements that all the end times events associated with the Second Coming would “come upon this generation” and be completed “before this generation passes away” (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34; Mark 13:30; Luke 11:51; Luke 21:32). In the Torah, the Exodus Generation had to wander for 40 years until they all died out and were replaced by the Conquest Generation.

This simile is called out even more explicitly in Hebrews 3-4, when the writer implores his readers not to fail to enter God’s rest the way the Exodus Generation failed to enter His rest during their 40 years in the wilderness. After Jesus’ ascension, during the remainder of the Last Days, He was seated at the right hand of God the Father (Hebrews 8:1), while the Father made His enemies His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-36; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 10:12-14).

In the Gospel of John, Jesus mentions repeatedly that He will raise up His followers on “the Last Day” (John 6:39; John 6:40; John 6:44; John 6:54), which Martha also references in John 11:24. In John 12:48, Jesus mentions that those who reject Him will be judged on the Last Day. The simplest interpretation of these verses is that the “Last Day” is the last day of the Last Days, when the rapture and the first resurrection took place.

The Great Tribulation

To interpret the “Great Tribulation,” we must realize there were two Great Tribulations: as previously mentioned, the Jews would experience intense tribulation under Vespasian (Daniel 7:25; Matthew 24:21; Mark 13:19; Luke 21:23-24), culminating with the Second Coming and the siege of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-27; Luke 21:25-28). However, there was a second Great Tribulation, mentioned in Revelation 1:9 and Revelation 7:14, which was the persecution and martyring of Christians under Caesar Nero after he

blamed them for the Great Fire of Rome that happened in 64 AD. This persecution lasted until Nero died in 68 AD (about 3.5 years) and claimed the lives of Peter and Paul, among many others.

The idea of two Great Tribulations, the first of Christians and the second of the Jews who rejected Jesus, is reflected in 1 Peter 4:12-19, when Peter mentions that judgment starts with the house of God and then falls on His enemies. The first Great Tribulation purged the Church of all false followers and brought the faithful who persevered to great glory, while the second destroyed the old system of worship that sustained the Jews who rejected Jesus and led to many of them being starved, killed by the sword, or being sent into captivity.

Note: To understand how the entire New Testament could be written before the First Jewish-Roman War, which is necessary for this paradigm to be correct, see Appendix B.

3921 / 32 AD – 33 AD: Paul is converted

3922 / 33 AD (Nisan) Paul makes his first trip to Jerusalem as an apostle

3924 / 35 AD (Q4): Peter witnesses to Cornelius

3924 / 35 AD (Q4): The Gospel officially extends to Gentiles

3933 / 44 AD (Q2-Q4): Paul makes his second trip to Jerusalem as an apostle

3933 / 44 AD (Q2-Q4): Herod Agrippa murders James the brother of John and imprisons Peter

After the Second Coming is described in Revelation 11, the book goes back to the birth of Jesus in chapter 12. The woman giving birth is the Jewish church, the body of Jewish believers from the time of Abraham to the time of Jesus (the twelve stars on her garland represent the twelve tribal patriarchs). The imagery here reinforces the idea that for faithful Jews, Jesus' coming was a culmination of Jewish history, not something new.

Jesus is born, then caught up to God and his throne, which is a reference to the ascension. The woman (the body of Messianic Jews) then flees into the wilderness, which is an ironic reference to Jerusalem, where the Jewish church was headquartered (it is ironic because just as the "true Jews" were the Jewish Christians who would be persecuted by the earthly Jewish nation, the "true Jerusalem" had transitioned from the capital of earthly Israel to the heavenly capital, leaving the old Jerusalem as a spiritual wilderness).

Satan and his demons, who apparently still had some purchase in heaven up to this point, are then cast out (just as Jesus predicted in Luke 10:18). This would be just after the resurrection, when the blood of the Lamb had been shed and could be used against them.

The “word of their testimony” and the bravery of “not loving their lives to the death” is a reference to the Old Covenant prophets who had the Holy Spirit in the days before He was poured out on all believers (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Such prophets endured various torments, up to and including martyrdom (Hebrews 11:35-38). Many members of the Jewish Church would experience similar persecution and martyring in the century after the ascension.

The “short time” of the devil refers to the time between the resurrection and the beginning of the millennium, at which point Satan would be cast into a bottomless pit for a very long time (Revelation 20:1-3). During that short time, Satan persecuted the Jewish Church (the “woman who gave birth to the male Child”), but she was protected from him for a time and times and half a time, which as we’ve previously seen means 3.5 years.

The serpent spewing water like a flood after the woman was Satan’s attempt to murder the apostles shortly after the ascension, while the “earth helping the woman and opening its mouth and swallowing the flood” is a reference to Gamaliel thwarting the Jewish plot to kill the apostles in Acts 5:33-41 (the “earth” in Revelation is a reference to Israel, while the “sea” is a reference to the Gentiles).

The end of Revelation 12 mentions Satan shifting his focus from the apostles to “the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” This refers to the persecution and scattering of the Jewish church under Saul in Acts 8.

To clarify the timeline in play here, we have to look at Galatians 1 and 2. Those two chapters mention two trips Saul/Paul took to Jerusalem: one after three years (Galatians 1:18) and one after fourteen years (Galatians 2:1). These two trips match thematically with his first two trips to Jerusalem as an apostle in Acts 9:26-30 and Acts 11:27-30. Galatians 1:22 in particular reenforces the idea that Paul took no additional trips to Jerusalem beyond what was recorded in Acts.

Paul’s second trip was to bring famine relief in the days of Claudius Caesar (Acts 11:28). Claudius became emperor in 41 AD, so this trip couldn’t have happened until 41 AD. Furthermore, the second trip happened “about the same time as” the murder of James the brother of John and the imprisonment of Peter (Acts 12:1-4) by “Herod the king.”

The Herod in charge of Judea from 41-44 AD was Herod Agrippa. After Agrippa’s death, Judea was entrusted by Claudius to a Roman procurator, and the next Herod, Agrippa II (who ruled over surrounding territories but not Judea itself), was still alive in Acts 25. Therefore, the Herod who harassed the Church and then was struck down and eaten by worms (Acts 12:23) had to be Herod Agrippa.

That means the second trip had to have happened somewhere between 41 AD and 44 AD (when Agrippa died). However, if Jesus was crucified in 32 AD, then this second trip couldn't have been 14 years after Saul's conversion or after his first trip. Instead, it must have been dated according to the time period of the Last Days, which we just determined to have started in Nisan of 30 AD.

Assuming Galatians 1 and 2 are dated from the beginning of the Last Days makes good sense of Acts and Galatians. Jesus was crucified during the Passover week of 3921, rose on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:4), and then ascended 40 days after His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Shortly after that was the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Jewish Church (Acts 2:1-4).

The various conflicts with the Jewish leaders in Acts 3-7 would have happened within the next several months after Pentecost. Saul's persecution of the church lasted a few months after that, and then he was converted. Acts 9:13-14 implies that Saul had only been focusing on persecuting Christians in Jerusalem so far (in other words, for weeks or months, not years), and he was just starting to chase them to other cities when he was blinded.

After his conversion, Paul went for a quick spiritual retreat in Arabia (Galatians 1:17), returned to Damascus, spent "many days" preaching Christ there (Acts 9:22-23), then went to Jerusalem (Acts 9:26).

I posit that this trip to Jerusalem would have been for Paul to participate in his first Passover as a Christian. Acts 9:27-30 mentions that Paul spent time with the apostles and preached in Jerusalem before fleeing to Tarsus. According to Galatians 1:18-19, the only apostles he actually saw were Peter and James the brother of Jesus. Apparently, the apostles were so terrified of Paul that they limited their exposure to him to just Peter and James, lest he betray them and wipe out all the apostles at once. Likely the others would have met with him eventually, had he not left after only 15 days (Galatians 1:18). The Passover celebration lasts eight days, so Paul would have had enough time to complete the festival before fleeing for his life from the faithless Jews (the life-threatening nature of this trip was part of the reason it took an additional 11 years before he returned to Judea).

Therefore, all of Acts 1:4-9:25 must have happened before the Biblical year running from spring of 32 AD to spring of 33 AD ended. Acts 9:31 mentions that after Paul left Jerusalem, "the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified." As Paul left Jerusalem right at the beginning of 3922, this peace would have lasted for the remaining 2.5 years of the 3.5 years of Revelation 12:14.

What happened when the 3.5 years ended? The next major event in the Book of Acts is the conversion of Cornelius and the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11). I posit that the exclusivity of the Gospel to the Jews ended with that conversion, after 2.5 years of a peace when the Jewish Church was growing, although there was a long period after that where the scattered Christians were wavering between evangelizing only Jews and also evangelizing Gentiles (Acts 11:19-21). The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to encourage this broadening of the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 11:20).

After Barnabas completed this mission, he went to Tarsus to connect with Saul (Acts 11:25). The two of them relocated to Antioch, where they spent a whole year teaching (Acts 11:26). During that year, they were warned of an upcoming famine, so they put together relief for the Christians living in Judea, which was sent to the Jerusalem elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:27-30). This was the trip mentioned in Galatians 2, which happened 14 years after the start of the Last Days in 3919, which means 3933.

3933 lasted from Nisan of 44 AD to Nisan of 45 AD. However, shortly after Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 12:1), Herod Agrippa killed James the brother of John and imprisoned Peter, which resulted in Peter fleeing to Caesarea. Shortly after that, Herod died, which happened in 44 AD. Therefore Paul's second trip occurred in 44 AD after the Jewish New Year.

In Galatians 2, Paul mentions that he was accompanied on his second trip by Barnabas, as well as Titus, a converted Gentile. Also, he mentions that there was a conflict between his party and false brethren who were attempting to bring the Gentile Christians into bondage (Galatians 2:3-5), which was happening because the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 had not occurred yet.

According to Galatians 2, during Paul's second visit, the apostles in Jerusalem acknowledged how Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to witness to the Gentiles, much as Peter was commissioned to witness to the Jews. Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch with John Mark (Acts 12:25) and then were soon sent out on a missionary journey to both Jews and Gentiles (Acts 13:1-3).⁴¹

They ended this trip with a long rest in Antioch (Acts 14:26-28), during which Peter visited at some point (Galatians 2:11). However, certain men came down to Antioch from James (Acts 15:1; Galatians 2:12), leading to Peter withdrawing from the Gentiles, for which Paul rebuked him (Galatians 2:13-21). Eventually Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem for

⁴¹ They started their evangelism by preaching in synagogues, but it was the God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogues who were most receptive to the Gospel, and Paul and Barnabas were soon preaching in Gentile forums.

the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:2-5), and Peter, having taken Paul's rebuke to heart, spoke in favor of freedom from the Law for the Gentiles (Acts 15:6-11).

The Jerusalem Council must have therefore occurred some time after Herod's death in 44 AD, as Peter felt comfortable returning to Jerusalem from his exile in Caesarea.

Commentary

The chronology of Jesus mirrors the chronology of not just the Exodus but also David: "David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah" (2 Samuel 5:4-5). David also was said to have reigned for seven years in Hebron (1 Chronicles 29:27), which would be based on the number of New Year lines he crossed.

Similarly, Jesus became a rabbi when he was "about thirty" (Luke 3:23). Because Jesus was born in Nisan of 6 BC, the fact that Luke explicitly says "about thirty" indicates he wasn't born close to the beginning of the year. More likely, he was born halfway through the Biblical year, such that He was still 30 but not quite exactly 30 or close to 31.

He thus became rabbi about halfway through 3914. That means He crossed the New Year line seven times during His earthly ministry before His crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension in 3921. This makes sense of an odd verse in the Old Testament, Numbers 13:22, which says that "Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt." That verse doesn't seem to connect to the narrative around it. However, when we consider that "Hebron" literally means "association" or "league," which is not far from the meaning of "church" (assembly), and "Zoan" literally means "place of departure," the verse might very well have been prophesying that Jesus would spend seven years building His church (league), then ascend (depart) to heaven.

Recall also that David had lived in Jerusalem prior to his official move while the city was being rebuilt and fortified. Jesus' appearance to Paul represented the end of a continuing presence with His church (see the overarching narrative of 1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Therefore, we could say that Jesus was temporarily in Jerusalem after His ascension and didn't "officially" move until Paul became the last apostle and the Church had peace (Acts 9:31). This happened right at the beginning of 3922, 7.5 years after the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. Jesus then spent 33 years in the heavenly Jerusalem, until the First Jewish-Roman War started right near the beginning of 3955.

The Beginning of the Millennium and the Third Jewish-Roman War

Calculations

4021 / 132 AD (Q2): The Third Jewish-Roman War (Bar Kokhba revolt) starts

4024 / 135 AD (Q4): Simon bar Kokhba dies in the fall of Betar

4025 / 136 AD: The Third Jewish-Roman War ends

The first 3.5 years of the first-century Church were discussed in Revelation 12. However, Revelation 13 jumps forward to the Third Jewish-Roman War (AKA the Bar Kokhba revolt), which started in 132 AD.

The beast from the sea was Simon bar Kokhba, the false Messiah who attempted to establish Jewish independence from Rome a second time during the Third Jewish-Roman War (the Second Jewish-Roman War being the less significant Kitos War). The beast being from the sea and having the body parts of the various Gentile empires from Daniel 7 probably represents the fact that by attempting to establish an independent Jewish kingdom on earth, Bar Kokhba was godlessly gathering the scraps of the beasts that Jesus had overcome in 70 AD, instead of pursuing the spiritual heavenly kingdom of Jesus that never ends.

Bar Kokhba was a charismatic leader, which would explain Revelation 13:4. His effort at independence lasted 42 months (Revelation 13:5), from spring or summer of 132 AD to fall or winter of 135 AD, when he was killed in the fall of Betar. Bar Kokhba declared war on any Jews who refused to support him, which primarily meant Jewish Christians who rejected his claim to be the Messiah. This persecution and slaughter of Jewish Christians was the war with the saints of Revelation 13:7.

All the other Jews (“every tribe, tongue, and nation” – Revelation 13:7, compare Acts 2:5-11 / “all who dwell on the earth” – Revelation 13:8) worshipped him as Messiah and followed him. But God assured the suffering saints that those who killed them or sold them into captivity would suffer the same fate (Revelation 13:10).

The beast from the earth was Rabbi Akiva, who as a rabbi was involved in spiritual shepherding (hence the horns like a lamb in Revelation 13:11) and promoted Bar Kokhba as Messiah (he “caused the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast” – Revelation 13:12). Note also that Bar Kokhba’s rebel government minted coins that declared him to be the “Prince of Israel.” By using the coins (“buying and selling”), a Jew

would be accepting Bar Kokhba as Messiah, thereby receiving a spiritual mark on his right hand or forehead (Revelation 13:16-17; compare Deuteronomy 6:6-8, Deuteronomy 11:18).

In Revelation 14, angels declare that the final judgment of Jerusalem and the Jews is at hand and that those who follow Bar Kokhba will be harshly judged. The text then begins a more detailed description of the judgment, which came in the form of the suppression of the revolt by the massive Roman forces sent to Judea by the Roman emperor Hadrian.

Revelation 16:15 implies that there was a “Third Coming” of Jesus, which was similar to the Second Coming in that Jesus would visit Israel in judgment as the heavenly supervisor of Roman armies sent to put down a Jewish rebellion, just as He did during the First Jewish-Roman War.

Archaeologists have found evidence of a strategic Roman military base and camp near Megiddo (AKA Armageddon),⁴² which is probably where the Romans mustered before their second conquest of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is referred to as Babylon in Revelation (see also 1 Peter 5:13), which explains Revelation 16:17-21 (possibly the hailstones are stones from Roman catapults). Babylon being drunk with the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (Revelation 17:6) refers both to the martyring of Christians by Bar Kokhba specifically and more generally the slaughtering of prophets and saints by the Jews throughout history. Jerusalem’s ultimate destruction is described in Revelation 18 and 19.

As the Romans finished suppressing the revolt, Bar Kokhba holed up in the fortress of Betar, which was besieged by the Romans (similar to the siege of Masada at the end of the First Jewish-Roman War); he finally died there in 135 AD. This final defeat is referenced in Revelation 19:17-21, which also references the aftermath of the revolt, which was the slaughtering of Jews throughout Judea on a genocidal level, the expulsion of Jews from Jerusalem, and the effective end of the nation of Israel until it was re-established in 1948.

This final campaign of devastation ended in 136 AD, in the Biblical year 4025, which was a Sabbath year. Note also that there were exactly 70 years of judgment from 66 AD to 136 AD (3955 to 4025).

Why the gap between 35 AD and 132 AD in the transition from Revelation 12 to Revelation 13? Because the 3.5 years of Revelation 12:6 and the 3.5 years of Revelation 13:5 form a sort of “final week” of Judaism before the end of the end times.

In the first 3.5 years after Jesus’ ascension, the Gospel was exclusively for Jews (as Romans 1:16 and Romans 2:10 say, it was for the Jew first and also for the Greek). However,

⁴² <https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/romans/1800-year-old-iron-legion-roman-base-discovered-near-armageddon-is-largest-in-israel>

Cornelius' conversion extended the Gospel to the Gentiles to make the Jews jealous, as described in Romans 11. While Paul promised that one day all Israel would be saved (Romans 11:25-27), the Jews in 132 AD failed to obtain this promise, instead pursuing the nationalistic goals of a false Messiah, even though this had never proved fruitful for them before.

Therefore, Jesus visited them again for “a time, times, and half a time,” the 42 months of Bar Kokhba, after which “the power of the holy people [would be] completely shattered” and “all these things [i.e., the end times] shall be finished” (Daniel 12:7). While the Second Temple was destroyed in the First Jewish-Roman War, the complete judgment and destruction of Judea didn't occur until the end of the Third Jewish-Roman War.

The time of the Gentiles separated these two halves of the final week of Judaism, which started with salvation and ended with destruction and desolation.

4021 / 132 AD: The second resurrection (the first millennial resurrection) occurs

4021 / 132 AD: The millennium starts

In Revelation 7:1-8, we see the faithful Christian Jews (symbolically estimated as 144,000) being sealed before the First Jewish-Roman War, which allowed them to be spared from the judgment. Revelation 7:9-17 shows the Gentile Christians who would also be brought to heaven in the first resurrection of 70 AD; Nero's persecution encompassed both Gentiles and Jews, which is why the Great Tribulation is mentioned in Revelation 7:14.

In Revelation 13, the same 144,000 Jews appear with the Lamb as final judgment looms over Israel. These are the previously resurrected and raptured Jewish Christians, who are virgins now that they are in heaven (Revelation 14:4; see Matthew 22:30 and Mark 12:25). The first generation of Christians were a firstfruits offering to God (James 1:18), which explains why the resurrected Jews are called “firstfruits” (Revelation 14:4). This original batch of Jewish saints would meet the newly resurrected Christian Jews who died opposing Bar Kokhba, and together the two groups would join Jesus in judging Israel.

In Revelation 20:1-6, we see Satan bound for a thousand years, and at the same time, thrones are set up for judgment, and certain saints are resurrected. There are two types of saints mentioned:

- Those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God
- Those who had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands

The “beheading” seems to be a reference to John the Baptist, who died via beheading (Matthew 14:10; Mark 6:27). Therefore, I posit that at the beginning of the millennium, two groups of saints were resurrected:

- All the Old Covenant prophets who had the Holy Spirit prior to it being given to the church on Pentecost.⁴³ John the Baptist was described by Jesus as the last and greatest of these, the last saint “born of woman” prior to the beginning of the Last Days, after which saints live in the kingdom of God (Matthew 11:11; Luke 7:28; for the meaning of being “born of woman,” see John 1:12-13).
- All Christians who died between 70 AD and the beginning of the millennium, including the Messianic Jews who were martyred for refusing to support Simon bar Kokhba. Possibly any Jewish Christians still living in Israel when the Third Jewish-Roman War began were raptured to heaven to save them from the judgment and allow them to participate in the judgment with the rest of the Jewish Christians.

Revelation 14:12-13 says, “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, ‘Write: “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.””’

This statement is followed by the description of the judgment of Israel during the Third Jewish-Roman War. That language connects to Revelation 20:6, implying that the millennium started and the second resurrection (the “first resurrection” of the millennium) occurred in 132 AD, before the war, which makes sense when you consider that God would have wanted the Jewish Christians who died opposing Bar Kokhba to participate in his destruction.

Note that in discussing Vespasian’s tribulation of the Jews during the First Jewish-Roman War, Jesus mentioned that it would be cut short before the Jewish nation was completely destroyed, and this would be done “for the elect’s sake” (Matthew 24:22; Mark 13:20). The “elect” in these verses refers to the Jews who would embrace Jesus as Messiah between 70 AD and 132 AD. Had Jesus completely destroyed Israel during the First Jewish-Roman War, this second round of Christian Jews would never have arisen.

If I am correct in my assessment of who was resurrected in 132 AD, then anyone who had had the Holy Spirit in their lifetime was placed on a throne with Jesus at the beginning of the millennium (if they hadn’t already been placed there in 70 AD), and any Christian who would die from that point forward would go directly to heaven to join Jesus as well, which is why God said, “Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.”

⁴³ I recall reading a mention by James Jordan in one of his articles about the possibility of Old Testament prophets being resurrected before the millennium, so I’m taking inspiration from him here.

As for the nature of the millennium, during that time, Satan would “deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:3). From this, we can see the following model in play:

Early church:

1. The gospel came to the Jews from the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist until the conversion of Cornelius. This was the first phase of the Great Commission (Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 13:10), which was originally understood by the apostles as applying to the Jews scattered amongst the nations.
2. The gospel and the Great Commission were extended to the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy. The Gentiles proved more receptive than the Jews (see Romans 10:18-21). Eventually the Great Commission was fulfilled when the gospel was preached throughout the nations of the Roman Empire to both Jew and Gentile (Colossians 1:5-6; Colossians 1:23).
3. The Jews had an opportunity to respond with conversion, but only a remnant did. The remnant was saved, while the Jewish nation that was beyond hope was destroyed.

The Church Age reflects the same paradigm on a larger scale:

1. The church from Jesus’ baptism in 30 AD to the beginning of the millennium in 132 AD was founded on Judaism and primarily focused on Jews, with Gentiles being allowed in to provoke the Jews to jealousy.
2. Israel as a nation was destroyed, while the Christian faith was taken over by Gentiles and is being spread throughout the entire globe, to the literal ends of the earth, aided by Satan being bound and therefore unable to deceive the nations of the world. Jesus said that after the old heavens and the old earth passed away (which happened in 70 AD), His words would become the directing force for God’s followers (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). They are therefore our guide in the time between Second Temple Judaism and the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15, as the Gospel spreads throughout the world like leaven in meal (Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21). Note: I call this spread of the Gospel the “Greater Commission,” as it is similar to the original Great Commission but much vaster and more thorough in scope.
3. Once the “fullness of the Gentiles has come in, all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:25-26), implying that the Jews will finally convert en masse to Christianity prior to the Great White Throne Judgment. The Great White Throne Judgment is “the judgment” of Matthew 12:41-42, Luke 10:14, and Luke 11:31-32, because except for the prophets of the Old Covenant (who went to heaven) and the false believers of the first-century Church (who went to hell), all the righteous who died before Christ and all the wicked who have died or will die outside of Christ have gone or will go to

Hades upon death until that great judgment, when Hades and Death (which represent separation from God's presence after death) will be destroyed. Note: the righteous members of the Old Covenant are waiting in the "good part" of Hades, while all the unjudged wicked are waiting in the "bad part," as seen in Luke 16:19-31.

I call this particular eschatological paradigm "pretermillennialism," because it puts the Second Coming of Jesus in the first century before the millennium of Revelation 20, but the Great White Throne Judgment after the millennium and in our future. In other words, it's very preterist and yet separates the Second Coming from the final judgment.

I suppose you could also call it "partial preterism +," as it is more preterist than standard partial preterism but is still a partial preterist theory.

The Future

The Biblical year 3921 ran from Q2 of 32 AD through Q1 of 33 AD. Therefore, to determine the Biblical year of any Gregorian year since then, Q1 would be (YEAR AD + 3888), while Q2-Q4 would be (YEAR AD + 3889). For example, Q1 of 2025 was 5913, while Q2-Q4 of 2025 and Q1 of 2026 are 5914. Every year, Nisan starts two weeks before the Jewish Passover.

Now, no eschatological analysis would be complete without some kind of attempt to predict the future, even an analysis like mine that puts so much of Daniel and Revelation in the past. I freely acknowledge that we may still be in the millennium, and thus Revelation 20:7-15 may be completely in our future, with us having no idea of what those events will look like until they happen. However, I have a speculation I will simply present as a possibility.

The resurrection of Jesus happened on the 80th Jubilee from creation, which as I've previously discussed represented the end of the connection between every tenth Jubilee and the portion of Israel's history that started with the Exodus. However, we are currently in the Jubilee cycle that started the year after the 120th Sabbath of Sabbaths of 5880 (the 120th Jubilee began in Nisan of 1992 AD). The number 12 is strongly associated with Israel, and thus the 120th Jubilee (the 12th tenth Jubilee) could have been the beginning of the time period that would bring in the salvation of all Israel mentioned in Romans 11:25-27.

There is a second layer of numerological symbolism here. Gary North has speculated that there may be a Sabbath millennium starting around the year 6000⁴⁴ (though he does not claim to be the first to do so), if every 1000 years of history symbolically corresponds to a day (as suggested in Psalm 90:4 and 2 Peter 3:8). Also, as previously mentioned, for the 50th, 60th, and 70th Jubilees, each one was preceded and/or followed by a corresponding number (50, 60, or 70) of years or Sabbath year cycles before or after another significant event. Mathematically the 120th Jubilee of 5881 would be the first year of 120 years that would end in exactly the Biblical year 6000. This potentially connects the idea of the conversion of the Jews after the 120th Jubilee to the Sabbath millennium that would begin around 2111 AD.

Yet a third layer of numerological symbolism is that there are exactly 40 Jubilees between the 80th Jubilee and the 120th Jubilee. The number 40 typically represents completion or totality in the Bible, so 40 Jubilees could represent the entirety of the Church age prior to the countdown to the Sabbath millennium. Furthermore, there were two Jubilees between

⁴⁴ I am currently unable to locate this reference. Wherever I read it, I also recall him pointing out that the millennium starting in the year 6000 would be the "third day" from the resurrection of Jesus, which happened around the year 4000 (4000-5000 would be day 1, 5000-6000 would be day 2, 6000-7000 would be day 3).

the crucifixion and the Third Jewish-Roman War, so the time of the Jewish church and the time of the almost completely Gentile church (provoking the Jews to jealousy) would fit the standard $2 + 38 = 40$ paradigm we've seen so often in Scripture.

Furthermore, in Revelation 20:7-15, the release of Satan is connected to two ideas:

- The deceiving of the nations and the gathering of the nations for war.
- Some kind of final assault on "the camp of the saints and the beloved city."

The beginning of the world wars of the early 20th century, which represented a global gathering of all nations for war (hence the term "world war") and transitioned the global political system from imperial colonialism to the globalist world order in place today, was two Jubilee cycles ago. The completion of those wars and the re-establishment of Israel as a nation was one Jubilee cycle ago. The Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the Sabbath of Sabbaths of the previous Jubilee cycle, establishing the world order in the current Jubilee cycle.

If Jerusalem is "the beloved city" of Revelation 20:9, then the re-establishment of national Israel would be a necessary precondition to Jerusalem becoming "the camp of the saints" and thus also to the final battle. Furthermore, part of the aftermath of the two world wars was the disintegration of Christendom, reflected by an almost complete official abandonment of Christianity as a moral and political system in the West. This would certainly be emblematic of a world in which Satan has been released from the bottomless pit.

If there will indeed be a mass conversion of the Jews before the year 6000, Jews from around the world being gathered within the borders of the historical nation of Israel would be a very obvious precursor. The final battle of Revelation 20:7-10 may therefore represent some kind of final assault on a converted Israel by the remaining unconverted forces from nations around the world (the Muslim Middle East, the apostate West, and other global players).

I therefore speculate that the Jews in the nation of Israel will experience a massive national conversion before spring of 2111 AD, possibly even before spring of 2041 (the end of the current Jubilee cycle).

What Does Eternity Look Like?

Concerning the New Heavens and the New Earth of Revelation 21-22, consider Genesis 1:1-2: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."

When the original heavens and earth were created on Day 0 of the initial creation, the heavens were created fully formed, while the earth was in an immature form. Per James Jordan⁴⁵:

“The earth as it was made was good, of course, but not yet developed. It lacked structure, was empty, and was dark. Nothing like this is said of heaven. Indeed, it is clear from the rest of the Bible that heaven was made structured, full, and bright from the beginning. The angelic host does not multiply, and so new angels do not appear in the process of time. Humanity was created as a race that matures into a host, while the angels were created as a host from the beginning.

The earth matures in a way that heaven does not. Heaven is thus the model or paradigm for the earth. The earth is to grow more and more heaven-like. In the rest of the Bible, when heaven opens, men see the models they are to reproduce on the earth, as when Moses was shown the model for the tabernacle.”

Revelation 19:7 indicates that the marriage supper of the Lamb followed immediately after the end of the Third Jewish-Roman War. However, in Revelation 21:2, the marriage supper is connected to the giving of the New Heaven and the New Earth. Moreover, the picture of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and 22 is seen as a perfect eternal existence, while the picture of Jerusalem in the New Heavens and the New Earth in Isaiah 65:17-25 still contains references to death and sinners in verse 20.

I believe the best way to reconcile all this information is as follows:

- The marriage supper of the Lamb occurred immediately after the Third Jewish-Roman War.
- The depiction of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22 is the New Heaven, which represents the eternal dwelling place of the resurrected saints. It was created to be perfect right away, without sin or suffering.
- As the original earth was physically formless, void, and dark, the New Earth (the world under the full force of the New Covenant) was spiritually formless, void, and dark when it was given after the Third Jewish-Roman War. However, it has been maturing through the spread and development of the Church over the last two millennia to become increasingly like the New Heaven. During this time, the leaves of the Tree of Life have been for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).
- The final 120 years of the current Biblical millennium will encompass the progression from the conversion of Israel to the final Satanic assault and defeat.
- After the defeat of Satan, the Great White Throne Judgment will bring all those in Hades out for judgment and eliminate the eternal waiting place once and for all.

⁴⁵ <https://biblicalhorizons.com/1997/10/01/9-10-the-sequence-of-events-in-the-creation-week-part-1/>

- The defeat of Satan and the destruction of the military forces of God's enemies will usher in a Sabbath millennium of global faithfulness to Christ and the peace and prosperity described in Isaiah 65:17-25. That passage describes the Jerusalem of the New Earth, which will be inhabited by the converted Jews of the Sabbath millennium.
- Isaiah 66 describes the final judgment of God's enemies (the Satanic assault and the Great White Throne Judgment), the gathering of Jews from around the world to the restored faithful Jerusalem, and the final happy state of the Jews (verses 22-23). Note that Isaiah 66:24 describes the Lake of Fire from Revelation 20:14-15, which will be the eternal resting place of the wicked, while the righteous first dwell in the New Earth, then go to the New Jerusalem when they die.
- The New Heavens and the New Earth will never end, which means there will be no end to the birth and death of saints, which is why the gates of the New Jerusalem will never be shut (Revelation 21:25). After the Great White Throne Judgment and the final defeat of Satan, suffering and sin will be greatly minimized in the New Earth. I would speculate that eventually humans will spread to other habitable planets (possibly we will develop terraforming technology), and the Church will encompass Christian empires that span galaxies.

Two comments on this paradigm:

First, Revelation 1:1 and Revelation 22:6 mention that the Book of Revelation is describing things that would take place shortly. However, Revelation 20 describes a period of at least 2000 years, which is also glossed over in 1 Corinthians 15:20-28.

How could such a long time be accounted as so short? There are two options:

- The "things that would take place shortly" extend only through the end of the Third Jewish-Roman War, and Revelation 20 is meant to be an additional look forward to the distant future.
- 2 Peter 3:8 says, "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Thus, the millennium before the climax of the history of God's conflict with Satan are/were as but a day to God.

Second, the idea of there being no discrete "end" to the earth raises the question of how there can be true worldwide peace and prosperity under Adam's curse. I would propose that the curse pronounced on Adam in Genesis 3:17-19 actually represented a curse on the production of vine-grapes. The model presented in the Bible is that men eat bread in the morning before working and then drink wine at night to relax. Wine is an essential part of rest.

When Adam was cursed, the ground would only bring forth thorns and thistles (Genesis 3:18), not the grapes required to make wine. Therefore, the antediluvian patriarchs had no true rest – they could only eat the herbs of the field and the bread that would nourish them while they toiled (Genesis 3:18-19).

Noah's father Lamech predicted that Noah would bring comfort from Adam's curse (Genesis 5:29). Therefore, it is probable that during the Flood, the water from below (Genesis 7:11) changed the nature of the soil, allowing for vine-grapes to finally be growable. And indeed, the Bible draws attention to Noah planting a vineyard after the Flood (Genesis 9:20).

Thus, I would suggest that what we suffer from today is not Adam's curse, but rather the devastating immediate and generational consequences of individual and societal sin. If Satan and the unrepentant sinful authorities in the world were to be suddenly removed (as depicted in Revelation 20:7-10), the world could soon heal to a place of widespread shalom.

Numerically Ordered List

Significance	Year	Gregorian	Event
	0		God creates, structures, and populates the heavens and earth
	0		Adam and Eve fall
	130		Birth of Seth
	235		Birth of Enosh
	325		Birth of Cainan
	395		Birth of Mahalalel
	460		Birth of Jared
	622		Birth of Enoch
Jubilee	687		Birth of Methuselah
	874		Birth of Lamech
	930		Death of Adam
Sabbath	987		God takes Enoch
	1042		Death of Seth
	1056		Birth of Noah
	1140		Death of Enosh
	1235		Death of Cainan
	1290		Death of Mahalalel
Jubilee	1422		Death of Jared
	1556		Birth of Shem
	1651		Death of Lamech
	1656		Death of Methuselah
	1656		The Flood
	1657		Noah leaves the ark
	1658		Birth of Arphaxad
	1693		Birth of Salah
	1723		Birth of Eber
Sabbath	1757		Birth of Peleg
Sabbath	1757		Tower of Babel
	1787		Birth of Reu
	1819		Birth of Serug
	1849		Birth of Nahor
	1878		Birth of Terah
	1948		Birth of Abram
	1996		Death of Peleg
	1997		Death of Nahor
	2006		Death of Noah
Sabbath	2023		Abram enters Canaan
	2026		Death of Reu
	2033		Abram marries Hagar

	2034	Birth of Ishmael
	2047	Renaming of Abraham and Sarah
	2047	Beginning of circumcision
	2048	Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah
	2048	Birth of Isaac
	2049	Death of Serug
	2083	Death of Terah
	2085	Death of Sarah
	2088	Isaac marries Rebekah
	2096	Death of Arphaxad
Jubilee	2108	Birth of Jacob and Esau
	2123	Death of Abraham
	2126	Death of Salah
	2148	Esau marries Judith and Basemath
	2158	Death of Shem
	2171	Death of Ishmael
	2185	Jacob flees from Esau to Laban
	2187	Death of Eber
	2192	Jacob's initial 7 years of service for Rachel end
	2192	Jacob marries Leah and Rachel
	2199	Jacob's second 7 years of service for Rachel end
	2199	Birth of Joseph
Sab. of Sab.	2205	Jacob flees from Laban
	2216	Joseph sold into slavery
	2227	Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and the baker
	2228	Death of Isaac
	2229	Joseph becomes governor of Egypt
	2236	Famine begins
	2238	Descent of Jacob's household into Egypt
	2243	Famine ends
Jubilee	2255	Death of Jacob
	2309	Death of Joseph
	2369	Birth of Aaron
	2372	Birth of Moses
	2389	Joshua is born
	2412	Moses flees to Midian
	2414	Caleb is born
	2452	Moses and Aaron first stand before Pharaoh
	2453	The Exodus
	2453	The manna begins
	2453	God gives the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai
	2454	The Tabernacle is erected

	2454		The second Passover
	2454		First census of Israel
	2454		The Israelite spies discourage Israel, causing all male Israelites age 20 and above (except Joshua and Caleb) to be condemned to die while wandering in the wilderness
Sabbath	2492		Aaron dies
Sabbath	2492		Second census of Israel
Sabbath	2492		Moses writes Deuteronomy
Sabbath	2492		Moses dies
Sabbath	2492		Joshua takes over as leader of Israel
	2493		Joshua leads Israel into the Promised Land
	2493		Israel keeps their first Passover in the Promised Land
	2493		The manna ceases
Sab. of Sab.	2499		Israel divides the Promised Land
Sab. of Sab.	2499		Joshua dies
Sab. of Sab.	2499		The First Apostasy begins
	2507		Othniel becomes judge
	2547		Othniel dies
	2547		The Second Apostasy begins
	2565		Ehud becomes judge
	2645		Ehud dies
	2645		The Third Apostasy begins
	2665		Barak and Deborah deliver Israel
	2700		Eli is born
	2705		The Fourth Apostasy begins
	2712		Gideon becomes judge
	2752		Gideon dies
	2752		The Fifth Apostasy begins
	2752		Abimelech makes himself king
	2755		Abimelech dies
	2755		Tola becomes judge
Sabbath	2758		Eli becomes judge
	2778		Tola dies
	2778		Jair becomes judge
	2798		The ark is captured by the Philistines
	2798		Eli dies
Sabbath	2800		Jair dies
Sabbath	2800		The Sixth Apostasy begins
	2818		Jephthah becomes judge and defeats the Ammonites
	2818		Samuel defeats the Philistines and becomes judge

	2824	Jephthah dies
	2824	Ibzan becomes judge
	2831	Ibzan dies
	2831	Elon becomes judge
	2841	Elon dies
	2841	Abdon becomes judge
Sabbath	2849	Abdon dies
Sabbath	2849	The Seventh Apostasy begins
Sabbath	2849	The second Philistine oppression begins
Sabbath	2849	Samson is born
Sabbath	2849	Saul is anointed as king
Sabbath	2849	Saul is proclaimed king
Sabbath	2849	Ishbosheth is born
	2850	Saul is coronated
	2851	Saul offers the unlawful sacrifice
	2859	David is born
	2869	Samson starts judging Israel
Sabbath	2884	Mephibosheth is born
	2889	Saul and Jonathan die
	2889	Samson ends the Philistine oppression with his death
	2889	David becomes king of Judah in Hebron
	2889	Ishbosheth becomes king of Israel
Sab. of Sab.	2891	Ishbosheth dies
Sab. of Sab.	2891	David conquers Jerusalem
	2896	David officially moves to Jerusalem
	2928	Rehoboam is born
	2929	Solomon becomes co-regent with David in Judah
	2929	David dies
	2929	Solomon becomes sole king of Judah
Sabbath	2933	The foundation of the First Temple is laid
Sab. of Sab.	2940	The First Temple is completed
	2953	Solomon completes the King's Palace
	2953	Solomon dedicates the Temple
	2969	Solomon dies
	2969E	Rehoboam becomes king of Judah
	2969E	Jeroboam becomes king of Israel
	2972	Rehoboam and Israel forsake the law of the LORD
	2974	Shishak invades Judah
	2986L	Rehoboam dies
	2986L	Abijam becomes king of Judah
Sab. of Sab.	2989E	Asa becomes co-regent with Abijam in Judah
	2991E	Jeroboam dies

	2991E		Nadab becomes king of Israel
	2992L		Baasha murders Nadab
	2992L		Baasha becomes king of Israel
	2994		Abijam dies
	2994		Asa becomes sole king of Judah
	2994		Asa begins cleansing Judah
	2994		Judah experiences rest from war
	3000		Jehoshaphat is born
	3004		Asa defeats Zerah the Ethiopian
	3004		Asa renews the covenant in Judah
	3005		Baasha invades Judah
	3015E		Elah becomes co-regent with Baasha in Israel
	3016L		Baasha dies
	3016L		Elah becomes sole king of Israel
	3016L		Zimri murders Elah
	3016L		Zimri becomes king of Israel
	3016L		Omri defeats Zimri
	3016L		Zimri dies
	3016L		Omri becomes king of Israel
	3020E		Omri wins his civil war with Tibni
	3023E		Omri moves the capital of Northern Israel to Samaria
	3026		Jehoram (J) is born
	3032E		Omri dies
	3032E		Ahab becomes king of Israel
	3033		Asa becomes diseased in his feet
	3035L		Asa dies
	3035L		Jehoshaphat becomes king of Judah
Sab. of Sab.	3038		Jehoshaphat sends teachers of the Law throughout Judah
	3043		Ahaziah (J) is born
	3051E		Jehoram becomes co-regent temporarily with Jehoshaphat in Judah
Sabbath	3052E		Ahaziah (I) becomes co-regent with Ahab in Israel
	3053L		Ahab dies
	3053L		Ahaziah (I) dies
	3053L		Jehoram (I) becomes king of Israel
	3058L		Jehoram (J) becomes co-regent with Jehoshaphat in Judah again
	3060		Jehoshaphat dies
	3060		Jehoram (J) becomes sole king of Judah
	3064		Jehoram (J) develops an incurable intestinal disease

	3065E		Ahaziah (J) becomes co-regent with Jehoram (J) in Judah
Sabbath	3066E		Jehoram (J) dies
Sabbath	3066		Joash (J) is born
Sabbath	3066E		Ahaziah (J) becomes sole king of Judah
Sabbath	3066E		Jehu kills Jehoram (I) and Ahaziah (J)
Sabbath	3066		Jehu becomes king of Israel
Sabbath	3066		Athaliah begins reigning over Judah
Sabbath	3073		Joash (J) becomes king of Judah
Sabbath	3073		Athaliah is killed
Jubilee	3088		Amaziah is born
Sabbath	3094		Jehoahaz (I) becomes co-regent with Jehu in Israel
	3096		Joash (J) and Jehoiada change the system for repairing the Temple
	3096		Jehu dies
	3096		Jehoahaz (I) becomes sole king of Israel
	3110		Jehoash (I) becomes co-regent with Jehoahaz (I) in Israel
	3111		Jehoahaz (I) dies
	3111		Jehoash (I) becomes sole king of Israel
	3113		Joash (J) dies
	3113		Amaziah becomes king of Judah
Sabbath	3115		Jeroboam II becomes co-regent with Jehoash (I) in Israel
	3126		Uzziah is born
	3127		Jehoash (I) dies
	3127		Jeroboam II becomes sole king of Israel
	3142		Amaziah dies
	3142		Uzziah becomes king of Judah
	3168		Zechariah becomes co-regent with Jeroboam II in Israel
	3169		Jotham is born
	3180		Jeroboam II dies
	3180		Zechariah becomes sole king of Israel
	3181		Shallum murders Zechariah
	3181		Shallum becomes king of Israel
	3181		Menahem murders Shallum
	3181		Menahem becomes king of Israel
	3190		Ahaz is born
	3191		Pekahiah becomes co-regent with Menahem in Israel
Sabbath	3192		Menahem dies
Sabbath	3192		Pekahiah becomes sole king of Israel
	3194		Pekah murders Pekahiah

	3194		Pekah becomes king of Israel
	3194		Jotham becomes co-regent with Uzziah in Judah
	3196		Uzziah dies
	3196		Jotham becomes sole king of Judah
	3202		Hezekiah is born
	3210		Ahaz becomes co-regent with Jotham in Judah
	3211		Ahaz deposes Jotham
	3211		Ahaz becomes sole king of Judah
	3214		Hoshea murders Pekah
	3214		Hoshea becomes king of Israel
	3224		Hoshea becomes king of Israel for the second time
Sabbath	3227		Ahaz dies
Sabbath	3227		Hezekiah becomes king of Judah
	3228		Hezekiah restores Temple worship
	3231		Assyria besieges Israel
	3233		Assyria conquers Israel
Sabbath	3241		Assyria invades Judah
	3244		Manasseh is born
	3256		Hezekiah dies
	3256		Manasseh becomes king of Judah
	3287		Amon is born
	3303		Josiah is born
	3309		Amon becomes co-regent with Manasseh in Judah
Sabbath	3311		Manasseh dies
Sabbath	3311		Amon is killed
Sabbath	3311		Josiah becomes king of Judah
	3317		Jehoiakim is born
	3319		Jehoahaz (J) is born
	3319		Josiah begins to seek God
	3323		Josiah begins to purge Judah of idols
	3331		Josiah renews the covenant and restores the Passover
Sab. of Sab.	3332		Zedekiah is born
	3335		Jehoiachin is born
	3342		Josiah dies
	3342		Jehoahaz (J) becomes king of Judah
	3342		Pharaoh Necho deposes Jehoahaz (J)
	3342		Pharaoh Necho makes Jehoiakim king of Judah
	3345		Nebuchadnezzar becomes co-regent with Nabopolassar in Babylon

	3345		Nebuchadnezzar takes the first round of captives (including Daniel and his friends) to Babylon
	3345		Jehoiakim becomes Nebuchadnezzar's vassal
Sabbath	3346		Nebuchadnezzar defeats Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish
Sabbath	3346		Nabopolassar dies
Sabbath	3346		Nebuchadnezzar becomes sole king of Babylon
	3348		Daniel becomes ruler and chief administrator of Babylon
Sabbath	3353		Jehoiakim dies
Sabbath	3353		Jehoiachin becomes king of Judah
Sabbath	3353		Nebuchadnezzar takes the second round of captives (including Jehoiachin and Ezekiel) to Babylon
Sabbath	3353		Nebuchadnezzar makes Zedekiah king of Judah
Sabbath	3360		The 70 years of Babylonian domination begin
	3362		Babylon lays siege to Jerusalem
	3364		Babylon destroys Jerusalem
	3364		Nebuchadnezzar takes the third round of captives to Babylon
	3368		Cyrus the Great is born
	3369		Nebuchadnezzar takes the fourth round of captives to Babylon
	3389		Evil-Merodach becomes co-regent with Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon
	3390		Nebuchadnezzar dies
	3390		Evil-Merodach becomes sole king of Babylon
	3390		Evil-Merodach releases Jehoiachin from captivity
Sab. of Sab.	3430		Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon
Jubilee	3431		The seven Weeks of Years begin
Jubilee	3431		Cyrus the Great returns the Jews to Judah
Jubilee	3431		Cyrus the Great appoints Cambyses II as governor of Babylon
Jubilee	3431		Cyrus the Great removes Cambyses II as governor
Jubilee	3431		The Jews rebuild the altar
	3432		70 years of anger end
	3432		The Jews lay the foundation of the Second Temple
	3433		Cambyses II becomes co-regent with Cyrus in Persia
	3434		70 years of fasting and mourning end
	3445		Darius the Great becomes king
	3445		Darius the Great stops the Jews from rebuilding the city of Jerusalem
	3447		The Jews resume the construction of the Second Temple again

	3448		Darius the Great banishes Queen Vashti
Sabbath	3451		The Jews complete the construction of the Second Temple
	3452		Ezra comes to Jerusalem
	3452		Darius the Great marries Esther
	3457		Haman attempts to exterminate the Jews
	3457		Purim is established
Sabbath	3465		Nehemiah becomes governor of Judah
Sabbath	3465		Nehemiah rebuilds the wall of Jerusalem
	3477		Nehemiah returns to Darius the Great
Sab. of Sab.	3479		The seven Weeks of Years end
	3884	6 BC (Nisan)	Jesus is born
	3884	6 BC (December)	The wise men visit Jesus
	3896	7 AD (Nisan)	Jesus astonishes the teachers in the Temple
	3914	25 – 26 AD	Jesus becomes a rabbi
	3918	29 AD – 30 AD	John the Baptist begins his ministry
	3918	30 AD (Q1)	Jesus is baptized
	3918	30 AD (Q1)	Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness while being tempted by Satan
	3918	30 AD (Q1)	Jesus renames Simon to Peter
	3918	30 AD (Q1)	Jesus calls Philip
	3918	30 AD (Q1)	Jesus turns water into wine at the wedding in Cana
	3919	30 AD (Nisan)	Jesus cleanses the Temple for the first time
	3919	30 AD (Nisan)	The Last Days begin
	3919	30 AD – 31 AD	Jesus ministers in Judea while John continues baptizing
	3919	30 AD – 31 AD	John is imprisoned
	3919	30 AD – 31 AD	Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee
	3919	30 AD – 31 AD	Jesus calls Simon, Andrew, James, and John
	3919	30 AD – 31 AD	Jesus chooses the twelve apostles
Sab. of Sab.	3920	31 AD – 32 AD	Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
Jubilee	3921	32 AD (Nisan)	Jesus is anointed
Jubilee	3921	32 AD (Nisan)	Jesus enters Jerusalem triumphantly
Jubilee	3921	32 AD (Nisan)	Jesus cleanses the Temple for the second time
Jubilee	3921	32 AD (Nisan)	Jesus is crucified
Jubilee	3921	32 AD (Nisan)	Jesus rises from the dead
Jubilee	3921	32 AD – 33 AD	Paul is converted
	3922	33 AD (Nisan)	Paul makes his first trip to Jerusalem as an apostle
	3924	35 AD (Q4)	Peter witnesses to Cornelius
	3924	35 AD (Q4)	The Gospel officially extends to Gentiles
	3933	44 AD (Q2-Q4)	Paul makes his second trip to Jerusalem as an apostle

	3933	44 AD (Q2-Q4)	Herod Agrippa murders James the brother of John and imprisons Peter
Sabbath	3955	66 AD (Q2)	The abomination of desolation occurs when the Jews stop offering sacrifices for the Roman emperor
Sabbath	3955	66 AD (Q2)	The First Jewish-Roman War begins
Sabbath	3955	67 AD (Q1)	Vespasian takes over the Roman invasion of Judea
	3958	69 AD (Q3)	Titus takes over the Roman invasion of Judea
	3958	69 AD (Q4)	Vespasian becomes emperor
	3959	70 AD (Nisan)	The Last Days end
	3959	70 AD (Nisan)	Jesus returns
	3959	70 AD (Nisan)	The rapture and the first resurrection occur
	3959	70 AD (Nisan)	Titus besieges Jerusalem
	3959	70 AD (Q3)	The Romans sack Jerusalem and destroy the Second Temple
Sabbath	3962		The siege of Masada ends
Sabbath	3962		The First Jewish-Roman War ends
	4021	132 AD	The second resurrection (the first millennial resurrection) occurs
	4021	132 AD	The millennium starts
	4021	132 AD (Q2)	The Third Jewish-Roman War (Bar Kokhba revolt) starts
	4024	135 AD (Q4)	Simon bar Kokhba dies in the fall of Betar
Sabbath	4025	136 AD	The Third Jewish-Roman War ends

Appendix A: Bible Evidence for a First-Century Parousia

If the Second Coming and associated end time events are in our future, and not the near future of the first-century Church...

1. Why did John the Baptist and Jesus say that the kingdom of heaven was “at hand” (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17), and Jesus said that some of the people standing in front of Him would not taste death until they saw the kingdom of God present with power (Mark 9:1; Luke 9:27), when the establishment of Jesus’ kingdom occurs in the midst of the events of Revelation (Revelation 11:15)?
2. Why did Jesus say that not one jot nor tittle of the Old Covenant Law would pass away until heaven and earth pass away (Matthew 5:18)? Significant sections of the Law became impossible to observe after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. How could those jots and tittles continue to apply, unless heaven and earth did indeed pass away at that time?
3. Why did Jesus say that his disciples would not finish going through all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes (Matthew 10:23)? This mission was cut short by the First Jewish-Roman War that devastated Israel. Has this mission continued for 2000 years nonetheless?
4. Why did Jesus say that some of the people standing in front of Him would not taste death until they would see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom (Matthew 16:28)?
5. Why, in the Gospel of Matthew, when asked about the destruction of the temple and the sign of His coming and the end of the age, did Jesus describe the end-time events and His Second Coming, and then say that “this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place” (Matthew 24:1-34; cp. Mark 13:30, Luke 21:32)? A generation in the Bible is 40 years (confirmed in Hebrews 3:9-10), and there were exactly 40 years between Jesus’ first cleansing of the temple and the siege of Jerusalem that resulted in the destruction of the temple. What better interpretation of “generation” is available that accords with both Biblical use and the events of recorded history?
6. Why, in the Gospels of Mark and Luke, did Jesus describe the end time events in response to a question solely about the destruction of the temple (Mark 13:1-4; Luke 21:5-7)?
7. Why did Jesus instruct his listeners to “watch” (Matthew 24:42; Matthew 25:13; Mark 13:33; Luke 21:36), if they were not to experience the coming of the Son of Man?
8. Why did Peter, when told by Jesus to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man, interpret Jesus’ intended audience as including Peter himself (Luke 12:40-41)?

9. Why did Jesus tell the high priest that he would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64; Mark 14:62)?
10. Why did Jesus say that “now” (meaning, in His very near future) the ruler of this world (i.e., Satan) would be cast out, when after the same event is described in Revelation 12:9, the devil is described as having a “short time” (Revelation 12:12)? Similarly, why did Paul say that God would crush Satan under the feet of Christians “shortly” (Romans 16:20)? Must not then either Revelation 20:1-3 or Revelation 20:10 have occurred shortly after Jesus’ speaking and Paul’s writings?
11. Why did the apostles believe that John could survive until the Second Coming (John 21:23), based on Jesus’ comment in John 21:22? Did they expect John to roam the earth for 2000 years, never aging and never revealing his true identity after the first century?
12. Why did Peter explicitly tie the speaking in tongues on Pentecost to the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy about the Last Days (Acts 2:16-17)? Is this not a straightforward statement that Peter was living in the Last Days?
13. Why did Paul say that it was “high time to awake out of sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed” (Romans 13:11)?
14. Why did Paul say that “the night is far spent; the day is at hand” (Romans 13:12)?
15. Why did Paul say that the Corinthians were eagerly waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:7)?
16. Why did Paul say that the “time is short... for the form of this world is passing away” (1 Corinthians 7:29, 31)?
17. How can some preach the cessation of tongues and prophecies in the first century, when the cessation of these things, according to Paul, happens “when that which is perfect has come” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10)? Does this not mean that either there are divine prophecies of such specificity as the binding of Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:11) and the coming of a worldwide famine (Acts 11:28) today, as well as tongues that can be interpreted by other Christians (1 Corinthians 12:10), or else the perfect has come already?
18. Why did Paul say that the Lord was at hand (Philippians 4:5)?
19. Why did Paul commend the Thessalonians for turning from idols to wait for the Son to deliver them from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians 1:10)?
20. Why did Paul say that the Day of the Lord would have overtaken the Thessalonians if they had remained in darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:4) and that the Thessalonians were to watch and be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:6)?
21. Why did Paul say that God would give the Thessalonians rest when Jesus was revealed from heaven (2 Thessalonians 1:7)?

22. Why did Paul warn the Thessalonians not to prematurely expect the coming of the Lord before certain signs were fulfilled (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)? Does this not mean Paul was priming them for the expectancy of His coming during their lifetimes? Would he have not otherwise told them not to expect His coming at all?
23. Why did Paul say, regarding the revelation of the man of sin that would directly precede the Lord's coming (2 Thessalonians 2:3; 8), that the mystery of lawlessness was already at work and that someone was at that time actively restraining the lawless one but would be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7)?
24. Why did Paul urge Timothy to fight the good fight of the faith until the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 6:12-14)?
25. Why did Paul command Timothy to "turn away" from the people who would come during the Last Days (2 Timothy 3:1-5)? Why did he contrast Timothy's continuance in the faith with the proliferation of evil men and impostors (2 Timothy 3:13-14)? Why did he connect Timothy's ministry with the coming of those who would not endure sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2-5)? Does this not indicate that Timothy was living in (or about to live in) the Last Days?
26. Why did the writer to the Hebrews say that in "these" Last Days, God had spoken to them by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2)? If the writer was not living in the Last Days, is there more revelation from the Son to come in our future?
27. Why did the writer to the Hebrews give them instructions to perform "as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25)?
28. Why did the writer to the Hebrews say that in a "little while" He "who is coming will come and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37)?
29. Why did James accuse the rich members of his audience of heaping up treasures in the Last Days (James 5:3)? Does this not mean that he was living in the Last Days?
30. Why did James exhort his listeners to be patient until the coming of the Lord (James 5:7)?
31. Why did James say that the coming of the Lord was at hand (James 5:8)?
32. Why did James say that the Judge was standing at the door (James 5:9)?
33. Why did Peter refer to the time his listeners were living in as the "last times" (1 Peter 1:20)?
34. Why did Peter say that the end of all things was at hand (1 Peter 4:7)?
35. Why did Peter refer to the dawning of the day and the morning star rising in the hearts of his listeners (2 Peter 1:19)? What could he be referring to except the Second Coming?
36. Why did Peter urge his listeners to look for and even hasten the Day of the Lord (2 Peter 3:11-12)?

37. Why did John say that it was the Last Hour, as evidenced by the fact that antichrists had already come (1 John 2:18)?
38. Why did Jude refer to the men who had crept into the church (Jude 1:4) as the mockers of the last time (Jude 1:18)?
39. Why do Revelation 1:1 and 22:6 refer to the events of the Book of Revelation as “things which must shortly take place”?
40. Why does Revelation 1:3 say that “the time is near”?
41. Why does Revelation 22:10 say that “the time is at hand”?
42. Why does John say that those who pierced (i.e., crucified) Jesus would see Him coming on the clouds (Revelation 1:7)?
43. Why did Jesus tell the church of Thyatira to “hold fast what you have till I come” (Revelation 2:25)?
44. Why does Jesus say repeatedly in Revelation that He is coming quickly (Revelation 3:11; 22:7; 22:12; 22:20)?
45. Why is there not a single reference to the Second Coming or the associated end times events as being in the distant future of the listeners or readers anywhere in the New Testament? Note: As discussed, the 1000 years of Satan’s binding in Revelation 20 started after the Second Coming.
46. Why does every other reference to the Second Coming or the associated end times events that does not include an explicit time frame reference either make as much or more sense when considered as being fulfilled shortly instead of fulfilled in our future?

Appendix B: A Pretermillennialist Timeline for the New Testament Canon

The mainstream Christian belief is that some of the New Testament, including John's writings, was written after the First Jewish-Roman War. However, that cannot be possible if the model I'm proposing is correct.

There are three reasons why we can be confident that the entire New Testament canon had to be completed before 70 AD:

- You had to be an apostle to write Scripture, and Paul described himself as the last apostle (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). All the apostles who hadn't died before Jesus' return would have been raptured when Jesus returned in Nisan of 70 AD.
- The "speaking by the Son" happened in the Last Days (Hebrews 1:1-2). Thus, the canon would be closed after the Last Days, which ended in 70 AD.
- Depending on the interpretation of Matthew 16:17-19, it is also possible that all New Testament Scripture required Peter's official approval (or delegated approval, in Paul's case – note that Peter approved Paul's writings in 2 Peter 3:15-16) and thus must have been completed before the deaths of Peter and Paul in the AD 60s.

There is supporting evidence for this in the content of the New Testament books:

- No New Testament books reference the First Jewish-Roman War or the destruction of the Second Temple as past events.
- The Book of Revelation shows the temple as still in existence (Revelation 11:1-2).
- Peter references symbolism from Revelation at least once (1 Peter 5:13) and possibly a second time (2 Peter 3:8 might be a reference to the millennium of Revelation 20). Therefore, Revelation was written while Peter was still alive.

We therefore need a timeline for the composition of the New Testament that would allow for all the books to be completed during the Last Days. Here is my suggested (but not definitive) reconstruction.

Matthew

The apostles would have had to write a Gospel immediately after Jesus' ascension (or even during His 40 days on earth after His resurrection) to help capture and communicate the story of Jesus' life and ministry to the converts who joined the Church. This Gospel would have had to be Matthew or Luke, because neither Mark nor John record Jesus' birth. Luke introduces his Gospel by suggesting that early accounts of Jesus' ministry came from eyewitnesses, whereas his book was a result of a later investigation intended to produce an

orderly account. As Matthew was an apostle and therefore an eyewitness, his Gospel would therefore be the natural candidate for first account.

Indeed, Matthew seems particularly geared towards Jews, which would make sense if it was written before the conversion of Cornelius. It also opens with a record of Jesus' genealogy, implying that it is the beginning of a new deposit of Scripture, just like in multiple places in Genesis, in Numbers 3:1, and in Ruth 4:18.

Matthew ends his narrative before the ascension, so it was probably written during the 40 days between the resurrection and the ascension. Mark and Luke, by contrast, end after the ascension, implying they were written later. John, not being synoptic, ends where thematically appropriate.

Bonus: Putting Matthew first allows for the traditional ordering of the Gospels to match the order in which I'm suggesting they were written.

Mark

In 44 AD, Saul and Barnabas were commissioned officially by James and Peter and John in Jerusalem to minister to the Gentiles (Galatians 2:9), which was confirmed by the Holy Spirit in Antioch (Acts 13:2). When Saul and Barnabas left Jerusalem, they took Mark with them (Acts 12:25).

The Gospel of Matthew was both written toward Jews and also very long because of Jesus' many speeches. This meant it was not ideal for a traveling ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. Therefore, Mark probably wrote his Gospel as a condensed, action-packed (heavy on the word "immediately") alternative to Matthew for use on their mission trip.

Alternatively, Mark may have already been writing it on Peter's orders before Saul and Barnabas arrived with the financial gift, and it was taken with them for their purposes, along with its author to help with its use. Either way, Peter and the apostles had the opportunity to give the Gospel their official blessing before it was taken on the trip.

Luke

After their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas eventually returned to Jerusalem, where the first church council resolved the issue of whether Gentiles had to keep the Law of Moses. The two apostles then went with a company of saints to Antioch to deliver the letter written by the apostles and the elders of Jerusalem to clarify the commandments applicable to Gentile Christians.

However, at that point they split up, because Barnabas wanted to bring Mark on their next journey, while Paul did not. Barnabas probably continued using the Gospel of Mark on his

missionary travels (Acts 15:39), but Paul at this point probably would have wanted a new Gospel, one tailored specifically for his purpose of visiting and strengthening previous converts (Acts 15:36; Acts 16:5).

Note that the Gospel of Luke is addressed to “Theophilus.” There is disagreement about who or what “Theophilus” is, but I posit it simply refers to a Christian reader, so that Luke 1:3-4 literally says, *“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent lover of God, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.”* This would align perfectly with a ministry to the previously converted (at least as an initial intent).

Based on the use of the pronoun “we,” starting in Acts 16:10, we know that Luke, the author of Acts, accompanied Paul and Silas and Timothy on this trip. Just like Mark, Luke had written his Gospel either at Peter’s urging or with his blessing, gotten a seal of approval from the apostles in Jerusalem, then gone with Paul as he used the Gospel in his ministry (possibly Paul bringing Luke with him so his book could replace Mark’s initiated the tension between him and Barnabas).

Note that in 1 Timothy 5:18, Paul refers to Luke 10:7 as Scripture while writing to Timothy (whom Paul picked up as a ministry assistant just after splitting with Barnabas). This suggests that Luke was the Gospel they were accustomed to referencing in their work together.

John

John is not a synoptic Gospel. It contains no reference to Jesus’ early years, and it covers largely different ground than the other Gospels. Furthermore, Luke’s Gospel declared itself to be a sufficiently thorough and orderly account of the life of Jesus, making another such Gospel unnecessary. Therefore, John must have been written for a completely different purpose than the other Gospels.

Up to this point, a Gospel had been written every single time Paul went to Jerusalem (except for his first trip in 33 AD, when the Gospel of Matthew was still being used for the entirely Jewish church). Therefore, it’s plausible the Gospel of John was written during his last visit in Acts 21.

According to Acts 24:27, Paul was arrested in Jerusalem two years before Porcius Festus succeeded Felix as procurator, which happened around 59-60 AD. Therefore, we can know for certain that Nero was emperor when Paul was arrested. Paul also knew that he was going to speak to the emperor (he requested this in Acts 25:10-11, and God confirmed this mission in Acts 27:24).

Therefore, Paul would have needed a special Gospel for this purpose. Instead of being a thorough account of Jesus's life, it would need to be an account that would make an impact on Caesar himself. Reasons why the text of the Gospel of John supports this:

- It begins with a meditation on Jesus' role as the Word (Logos), which struck right to the heart of Greco-Roman philosophy. Roman kings considered themselves philosophers to some extent (based on Plato's *Republic*), so this would have been deeply impactful to one.
- The last verse of John contains a reference to books being unable to capture all the deeds of Jesus. This alludes to the multiple times the Old Testament (especially 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles) mentions that all the deeds of a specific king are recorded in more comprehensive historical books. Jesus is presented here as the highest of kings, greater than any earthly king (because His reign cannot be thoroughly summarized), which would be how an apostle would finish a Gospel written for a king.
- John states toward the end of his Gospel that he chose to relay certain miracles of Jesus "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). I posit that John was originally speaking to a specific person, Caesar Nero, not to a generic person (although it served a broader purpose later).
- John recounts Jesus' prediction of Peter's martyrdom at Nero's hands (John 21:18), showing Nero that God was completely sovereign over history and all of the emperor's decisions.

Unfortunately, Nero responded by killing the messenger (Paul) and the person recorded as the leader of the Christian church at the end of the book (Peter). Nero did not, however, kill John himself, but instead imprisoned him on Patmos (Revelation 1:9). Possible reasons:

- He may have been strangely touched by the message of John's Gospel and wanted to spare him.
- He may have been spooked by John 21:22-23 into believing John could not be killed, and thus he chose to lock him away instead of risking a direct encounter with Yahweh's providence, in some kind of mystical fear of God's power.

The Gospel of John would therefore have been written and blessed by the apostles at some point between Paul's final visit to Jerusalem and his departure for Rome.

Acts

Some time passed between Festus starting his time of service and Paul being sent to Italy. The journey to Rome took months, and then Paul spent an additional two years preaching and teaching before his trial (Acts 28:30-31). His trial was therefore probably around 62 AD,

although it could have been 63 or even 64 AD (it had to be before the Great Fire of Rome, because in using Christians as scapegoats, Nero showed that he had already heard the Gospel preached to him by Paul, knew who they were, and had decided to oppose them instead of joining them).

It is hard to believe Luke would not have recorded an account of the trial if he had written Acts after it had taken place, so Acts had to have been completed just as the trial was about to start.

Other Books

Revelation would have been written somewhere between the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD (as the Great Tribulation under Nero had already started) and the start of the First Jewish-Roman War in 66 AD, which was described as still in the future in Revelation 4:1.

As the first epistle of Peter references the symbolism of Revelation, both 1 Peter and 2 Peter would have been written after Revelation was written. They also would have been written before Nero's death in 68 AD, as Peter mentioned his impending death in 2 Peter 1:13, which happened during Nero's persecution of the Church.

1 John says it was written during "the last hour," implying that all three of John's epistles were also from that time and that the falling away of fake Christians had already begun (1 John 2:18-19), which was a sign of the end being very near (2 Timothy 3:1-9).

Jude's whole letter was also about this falling away, which was happening at the time he wrote. His letter was quite possibly the last book of the New Testament to be written.