

# The Crucifixion Year

Yeshua of Nazareth was immersed by John the Baptist in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Cesar in the year 4169.<sup>207</sup> (Tiberius succeeded Augustus Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, A.D. 14 by decree of the Roman Senate. The Jewish new year was Sept. 14, A.D. 14, and, Augustus died August 19<sup>th</sup>, so the 1<sup>st</sup> year of Tiberius commences with the autumn new year for 4154.<sup>208</sup>) Yeshua was immersed by John toward the end of Tiberius' 15<sup>th</sup> year (A.D. 29), and accordingly the first Passover in John 2:13 was the spring of A.D. 30, anno 4170. This Passover was the 46<sup>th</sup> year since the completion of major work on the Temple (John 2:20). Building of the main outer structures commenced in the 18<sup>th</sup> = 15<sup>th</sup> year of Herod, 4117, and lasted 8 years. The 46-year era began with the completion of the inner Temple in the 25<sup>th</sup> = 22<sup>nd</sup> year of Herod, but work on the outer structures went on.<sup>209</sup> Taking all of this into account means that the 46<sup>th</sup> year comes to Passover in the year 4170 = A.D. 30.

## The Length of Yeshua's Ministry

Yeshua tells a parable giving the length of His ministry in Luke 13:7-8, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down!" The dresser of the vineyard said, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it." Adding 4 years to Nisan A.D. 30 brings us to Nisan A.D. 34, or anno 4174. So the Lord left the tree alone for all of 4173, but after the 4<sup>th</sup> year expired He cursed the fig tree. This parable gives the length of the whole ministry in one passage.

However, yet more details fix the chronology. The Passover season is at hand in Luke 6:1, "on the second-first Sabbath." The Passover holy day, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Aviv (Nisan) is

called "The Sabbath" (Lev. 23:11, 15)<sup>210</sup> because it was the principle annual Sabbath of the year, the same day that the anniversary of the Exodus would be counted, and the 480 years of 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 6:1. The weekly Sabbath would follow this annual Sabbath. Israel developed ways to distinguish between the Passover Sabbath and the weekly Sabbath. Since the Passover Sabbath was the *first day of unleavened bread*, it was called the *First Sabbath*, and the weekly Sabbath that followed, was called the "Second-first" Sabbath.

Moreover, because God required Israel to count seven Sabbaths after the Passover during the 50 days leading to Pentecost,<sup>211</sup> the "Second" Sabbath was also known as the "First" Sabbath. Therefore, they called it the "Second-first Sabbath" to distinguish it from the Passover Sabbath.

So, Luke 6:1 is referring to an additional Passover in A.D. 31, anno 4171.<sup>212</sup> John 6:4 refers to the Passover of anno 4172, A.D. 32. Yeshua absented himself on a journey during the Passover of A.D. 33, implied in Luke 13:1, when Pilate mixed some Galileans blood with their Passover sacrifices. Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> year, 4173, of the parable terminates with the Passover of A.D. 34, anno 4174.

The year 4174, A.D. 34, satisfies the lower bound of the Daniel 9:24-27 prophecy. It is immediately after the 62<sup>nd</sup> Sabbatical year 7, A.D. 32/33.

For a more restricted upper bound, Caiaphas was high priest until A.D. 36.<sup>213</sup> This narrows the window down to 4174-4176 (A.D. 34-36). Finegan says "the latest date for his baptism is A.D. 29 (252.38, §581) and the longest duration of his ministry is three or four years (§603). The range of years from A.D. 27 to 34 should, therefore, cover the span of time within which to look for the date of the death of Jesus."<sup>214</sup> Since Daniel 9:24-27 requires the year to be A.D. 34 or later, and other considerations require the year to be A.D. 34 or earlier, the answer must be A.D. 34. Sir Isaac Newton came to the same conclusion based on a study of the internal chronology of Messiah's ministry, and declared A.D. 34 to be correct.<sup>215</sup> So also Solomon Zeitlin.<sup>216</sup>

<sup>207</sup> Richard Wellington Husband, "The Year of the Crucifixion", *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* Vol. 46. (1915), pp. 5-27, writes "The Roman historians are unanimous in considering that the reign of Tiberius began with the death of Augustus, and not with the time at which special titles and functions were conferred upon him by the senate" (pg. 19). "Josephus and Philo adopt exactly the same method as the Roman historians" (pg. 20). "A careful examination of about 25 volumes of extant papyri from Egypt justifies the assertion that there is not the slightest hint in the whole mass that the reign of Tiberius was computed from any other time than 14 A.D." (pg. 21). He records an inscription "from Cyprus dated in the 31<sup>st</sup> year of the tribunician power, and the 16<sup>th</sup> year of the reign, of Tiberius" which "can be only 29 A.D." (pg. 23). Husband then debunks the undatable Sarmatia inscription, and proceeds to conclude "The opinion, therefore, that the verse of Luke, defining the time ... refers to the year 26, is contrary to the view of the historians ... contrary to opinion of the early church, is contrary to Josephus and Philo, is refuted by the evidence of the papyri and inscriptions, is not supported by the use of the word ἡγεμονία; ... which renders conclusive evidence that the ministry of Jesus could not have begun until the year 29 at the earliest. Husband then conclude that it is impossible that the crucifixion could have occurred before the year 32 A.D. (pg. 27) based on the minimum time required for his ministry in the book of John.

<sup>208</sup> As in Finegan 252.38, Table 164.

<sup>209</sup> See §§590 & 595, Finegan (252.38) pages 346 and 348-349.. The conclusion is that the first Passover of Yeshua's ministry was A.D. 30.

<sup>210</sup> Also in Mesopotamia, they called the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month *šabbattu* as a semi-monthly "day of rest". See Jastrow, Morris, "The Day After the Sabbath", *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, Vol. 30, No. 2. (Jan., 1914), pp. 94-110. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees on this day. The Exodus was on this same day.

<sup>211</sup> Lev. 23:15-16, "From the time after the [Passover] Sabbath you shall count seven complete Sabbaths. Yet, following the seventh Sabbath you shall count a fiftieth day." (See Exegesis, page 86)

<sup>212</sup> It is noted that Yeshua's disciples were eating the new grain on this Sabbath, an act that was only permitted after the waving of the sheaf in the Temple on the day after Passover.

<sup>213</sup> In A.D. 35, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan was Tuesday, April 12. In A.D. 36, the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan was Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. The Astronomy is not favorable for A.D. 35-36.

<sup>214</sup> Finegan, Jack, *The Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, revised edition, pg. 359, §616 (252.38).

<sup>215</sup> See Isaac Newton 253.89, *Observations on Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John*, part 1, chapter 11. See longer note 242.15.

<sup>216</sup> See 255.154: Zeitlin, Solomon, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, "The Duration of Jesus' Ministry", Vol. LV, 1965. See also 255.152: Zeitlin, Solomon, "The Date of the Crucifixion According to the Fourth Gospel" *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 51-52, 1932-1933. "The Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, gives Jesus' ministry from the time he came to John in the year 29 until he was crucified in the spring of 34, thus lasting over three years" (Zeitlin, *JQR* LV 1965, page 200).