



Skeptics and critics claim the Bible is not historical, but **“cleverly devised legends” (2 Peter 1:16 Weymouth)**. However, the New Testament timeline is confirmed by both prophecy and history. We’ve examined how the various details of Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy weeks of years were fulfilled in another article on this website. Now let’s look at many of the details from the perspective of the New Testament timeline in connection with these events.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF DANIEL’S SEVENTY WEEKS

539 or 538 BCE — The **“seventy weeks”** prophecy is given to the prophet Daniel in **“the first year [of] Darius . . . of the Medes” (Daniel 9:1,24-27 NKJV)**.

458 BCE — The first **“seven weeks”** (49 years) of the **“seventy weeks”** prophecy start with the **“decree” “in the seventh year of Artaxerxes” (Ezra 7:13,7)**, to carry out the work according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, and of Artaxerxes, kings of Persia’ (**Ezra 6:14; Ezra 7:7, 12-24 NIV**), the 69 week period (483 years) starts with the decree in 458 BCE, and ends with Jesus’ baptism in 26 CE. This works out perfectly when harmonized with the historical facts, as we shall see further, below.

409 BCE — The first **“seven weeks”** end. During this time, **Jerusalem** [was] **rebuilt with streets and strong defenses, despite the perilous times” (Daniel 9:25b NLT)**. The “sixty-two” weeks of years (434 years) begin to run.

26 CE, fall — **“Messiah the Leader” (Daniel 9:25 LSV)** appears at the end of the 69 weeks of years, when Jesus Christ is baptized by John the Baptist, and is ‘anointed’ with the holy Spirit (**Daniel 9:24; Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21,22; Acts 4:27; 10:38**). The last **“one week”** of years (7 years) of the **“seventy weeks”** begins, which includes the exclusive offer of the gospel to **“the many”**, that is, those in the Abrahamic “covenant”.

30 CE, spring — The **“middle of the week” (Daniel 9:27 NKJV)** occurs with **“the Messiah”**, Jesus, being **“cut off”** in death (**Daniel 9:25; Matthew 27:50; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; John 19:30**). The temple curtain is torn in two, which, in effect, **“put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering”** at the Jerusalem temple from having any further effectiveness with Almighty God (**Daniel 9:27 NASB**).

33 CE, fall — The last **“one week”** (7 years) of the “seventy weeks” of years ends with the conversion to Christianity of the first Gentiles (**Acts 10:1-47**).

NEW TESTAMENT TIMELINE & THE SEVENTY WEEKS PROPHECY FIT HISTORY

The striking fulfillment of how the details of the various aspects of the “seventy weeks” fit

into the New Testament timeline is amazing. Now let's see how other Biblical and historical events fit into the fulfilled prophecy of the seventy weeks of years and the New Testament timeline.

5 BCE, spring — John the Baptist, six months older than Jesus, is born (**Luke 1:24-45, 57**).

5 BCE, early fall — Jesus is born during the reign of Roman emperor **“Caesar Augustus” (Luke 2:1-7)**, who ruled from 27 BCE to 14 CE, **“in the days of King Herod” (Matthew 2:1 NAB)**, who reigned from 37 BCE to 4 BCE, **“when Quirinius was governor of Syria” (Luke 2:2)**..

—In its note on **Luke 2:2**, referring to **“the first registration . . . taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria”**, the NLT Study Bible says: *“Quirinius held this post AD 6-9. In 6-4 BC Quirinius also had authority over Judea, possibly through some kind of joint rule. He may have begun the census”*.

—*“Quirinius. This official appears to have been in office for two terms, first in 6-4 BC, and then AD 6-9. A census is associated with each term”—NIV Study Bible*

—*“It is thought that Quirinius served two terms as Roman governor of Syria; from 6-4 B.C., and then A.D. 6-9.”—HCSB Study Bible*

early 4 BCE — A few months after Jesus is born, **“Herod . . . ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under” (Matthew 2:16 NAB)**. But, before long, **“Herod died” (Matthew 2:19 NIV)**, on April 4, 4 BCE. He ruled from 37 BCE to 4 BCE. Then, **“Archelaus [began] ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod” (Matthew 2:22 NAB)**. He ruled from 4 BCE to 6 CE.

26 CE, spring — **Luke 3:1,2 — “In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar”**, John the Baptist began to preach, being about 30 years old at the time. Tiberius

began to co-rule with his stepfather Caesar Augustus in 11 CE, so his 15th year could be viewed as running from 25 CE to the fall of 26 CE, as Luke apparently did.. His solitary official rulership was from 14 CE, when the Roman senate confirmed him as Emperor, until his death in 37 CE. Luke, however, is using the de facto position of Tiberius as the starting point of his reign. John the Baptist's beginning to preach in the spring of 26 CE certainly falls within this 15th year. " . . . **when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea.**" Pilate was prefect of Judea from 26 CE to 36 CE. " . . . **and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee.**" This was Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, who ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BCE to 39 CE. " . . . **and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis.**" He was another son of Herod the Great, and ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BCE to 39 CE. " . . . **during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas.**" Annas had been the high priest from 6 CE to 15 CE, when he was deposed by the Roman authorities. Caiaphas was high priest from 18 CE to 36 CE. Annas, however, continued to function as a de facto co-high priest with Caiaphas (John 18:13). Luke, as in the case of Tiberius, is using the de facto position of Annas as co-high priest, rather the official situation.

27 CE, spring — **"The Jews said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years'" (John 2:20 NAB).** The piecemeal rebuilding and expansion of the temple began in 20 BCE and was not completed until 64 CE. So, in 27 CE, it had been going on for 46 years. The often used 30 CE date for Jesus' first Passover after his baptism does not harmonize with this time period.

circa 31-32 CE — Murder of Stephen (**Acts 7**)

circa 32 CE — Conversion of Saul, who later became the apostle Paul (**Acts 9:1-18**). Saul (Paul) spends **"some time" "in Damascus" (Acts 9:22,23 NRSV).**

circa 32-35 CE — Saul (Paul) spends about **"three years"** in **"Arabia,"** returns **"to Damascus"**, then goes **"to Jerusalem . . . for fifteen days"**, then goes to **"Syria and Cilicia" (Galatians 1:17-21).**

circa 49 CE — **“After fourteen years,”** Paul goes **“to Jerusalem”** again (**Galatians 2:1**), for the important council meeting (**Acts 15:1-4**).

Thus, according to the scriptures, there was approximately a 17 year period between Saul’s (Paul’s) conversion and his second trip to Jerusalem. The often used execution date of Jesus of 33 CE does not allow for this 17 year time period.

CONCLUSION

Jesus died the day before the sabbath (**John 19:31**), which means he died on the day we now call Friday. Of all the plausible dates for Jesus’ death on the Passover Festival, which falls on **“the fourteenth day of the first month,”** (**Leviticus 23:5**), and also when, **“the next day . . . was the Sabbath”** (**John 19:31 NLT**), or Saturday, as we call it today — there are only two years this occurred, namely 30 CE and 33 CE. As we can see from a number of facts above, the 33 CE date does not work out, leaving only 30 CE as the date of Christ’s execution. This conforms with the New Testament timeline.

There are many other amazing historical details that fit Daniel’s inspired prophecy of the “seventy years”, that were documented above in the New Testament timeline. All these, and more, provide evidence that, **“Only I [“God”] can tell you what will happen in the future before it even happens. Everything I [“God”] plan will come to pass”** (**Isaiah 46:9,10 NLT**).

The Bible is a collection of books, not of **“cleverly devised legends”** (**2 Peter 1:16 Weymouth**), but accurate prophecy and history, and harmonizes with known, provable facts.