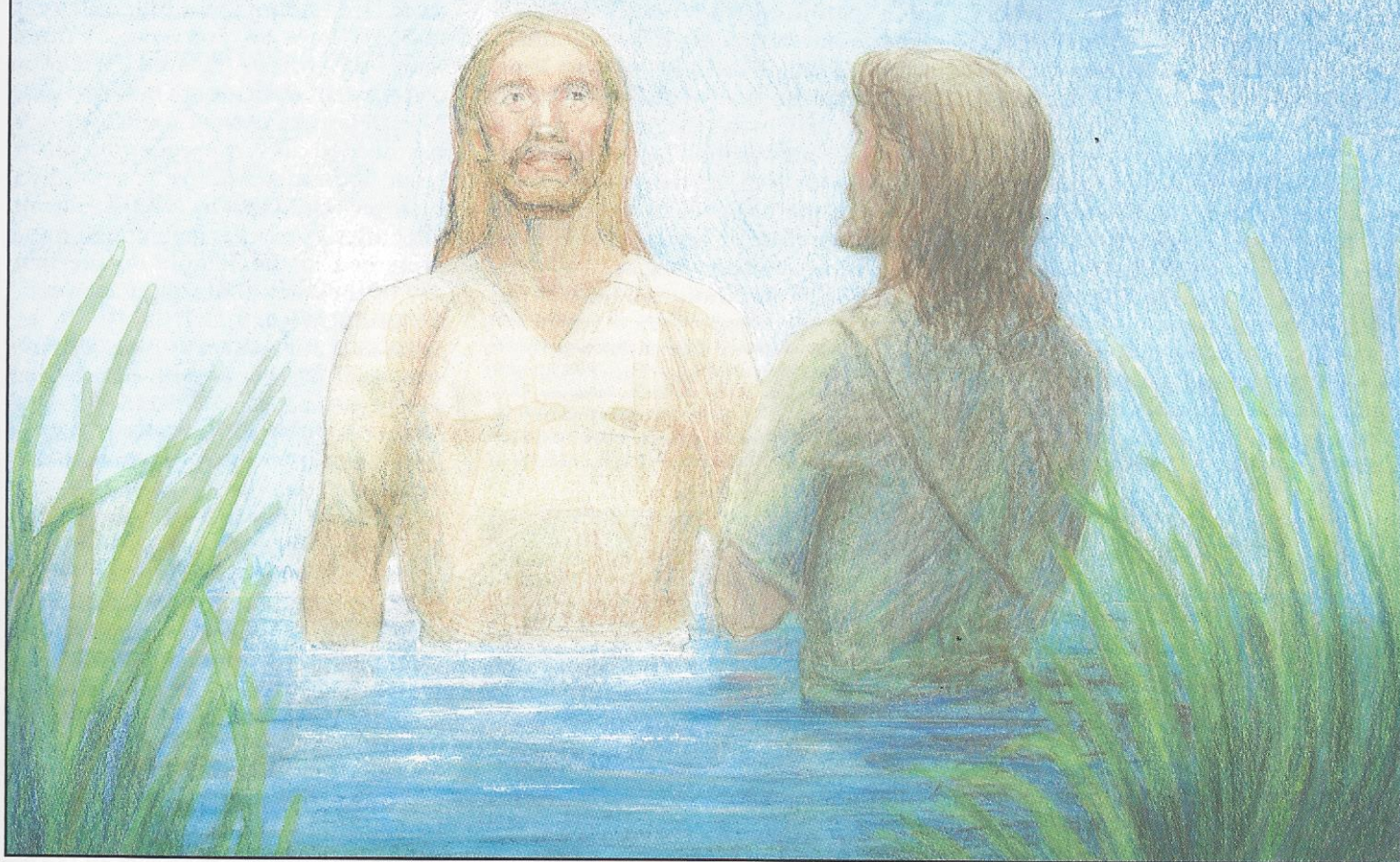


The Ministry of Jesus Christ



Jesus Christ's ministry could not have been three-and-one-half years as tradition has led us to believe, but rather one year.

Walter J. Cummins

Jesus Christ was the final Passover. From the time of Moses when the

first Passover lamb was sacrificed until Jesus Christ, the Judeans offered the sacrifice each year on Nisan 14. According to Exodus 12, it had to be a lamb without blemish, a male of the first year. In order for Jesus Christ to be the final and perfect Passover, he also had to be a male of the first year without blemish.

According to I Peter 1:19, he was "...a lamb without blemish and without spot." In order for him to be a lamb of the first year, his ministry could not exceed the one-year specifi-

cation. In other words, his ministry could not be three-and-one-half years as tradition has led us to believe, but rather one year. A lamb born in the spring was considered a lamb of the first year the following spring. Jesus was declared to be the lamb of God by John the Baptist in the spring of the year shortly after his baptism and forty days in the wilderness.

John 1:29:

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.



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This declaration occurred shortly before Passover in the month of Nisan. *John 2:13:*

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Therefore, the time from this first Passover in Jesus Christ's ministry until the Passover in which he was the Passover lamb could not exceed one year. And it doesn't.

To pinpoint the exact year of the crucifixion we must recall from Dr. Wierwille's study in *Jesus Christ Our Passover* that the crucifixion fell on a Wednesday, Nisan 14.¹ This was the day of preparation, when the lamb was normally killed, immediately preceding the high Sabbath or holy convocation which began the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

John 19:31:

The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

This was not the weekly Sabbath, but the high Sabbath on Nisan 15 which began the feast.

gan the feast. According to Matthew 12:40 Jesus was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. No Gospel record says he arose on Sunday, but rather that when the women came to the tomb early on Sunday, he had already risen. If he was buried shortly before sunset on Wednesday, Nisan 14, then he would have risen shortly before sunset on Saturday, Nisan 17, in order to fulfill this prophecy in Matthew 12:40. So, Jesus Christ was crucified on Wednesday, Nisan 14.

The years 28 A.D. and 31 A.D. are the only years within a historically reasonable span in which Nisan 14 fell on a Wednesday, according to astronomical calculations of the new moon.² If 31 A.D. were the year of the crucifixion, then Jesus Christ's beginning as the lamb of God was in 30 A.D. This is impossible due to certain other dates given in the Gospels, as we shall see later. Therefore, if he was crucified in 28 A.D., his ministry began in 27 A.D. From John's declaration of Jesus as the

lamb of God in Nisan in the spring of 27 A.D. to his crucifixion in Nisan of 28 A.D. is approximately one year.

In 28 A.D., the fourteenth of Nisan fell on Wednesday, April 28, according to the solar calendar, which appears to be quite late in the year compared to the modern dates for Easter. However, the Judeans did not determine the date for Passover by reference to a fixed date on a solar calendar as we today fix Easter with respect to March 21, the vernal equinox. Rather, the Judean months began with the new moon, so that a twelve-month year was only about 354 days, 11 days short of a full solar year of 365 1/4 days. So, every two or three years, the priests delayed Nisan by declaring an extra month before Nisan. They determined when an extra month was needed and, consequently, which lunar month would be Nisan when Passover would fall, by whether or not the barley crop was ripe enough to be presented in the Temple on the first day of the week following Passover.

Leviticus 23:10 and 11:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: And he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

This makes the date for Passover partially dependent on the weather, for the crop had to be ripened sufficiently before it could be presented at the Temple. Normally the barley crop was ripe by early April in the Jerusalem area, but if the winter was long and severe, the barley crop would not ripen until late April. Then the extra month would be added to the calendar in order for the barley to be ripe for the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

So, if Wednesday, Nisan 14 (April 28) in 28 A.D. was the day of Jesus' crucifixion, then the Passover referred to in John 2:13 at the beginning of his ministry was Thursday, Nisan 14 (April 10) in 27 A.D. Three scriptures in the Gospels corroborate the spring of 27 A.D. as the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry. They are Luke 3:1 and 23; and John 2:20. The record in John 2:20 occurred while Jesus was at the Passover mentioned in John 2:13. Luke 3:1 and 23 both line up with Jesus' baptism and temptations, which occurred shortly before the Passover of John 2:13. Therefore, all three occurred in the late winter and early spring of 27 A.D.

1. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Our Passover* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1980), pp. 17-30.

2. Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), p. 295; Richard A. Parker and Waldo H. Dubberstein, *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.—A.D. 45*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 46; James L. Boyer, *Chronology of the Crucifixion and the Last Week* (Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, n.d.).



Overthrowing the Money Changers' Tables (*John 2:13-16*)

Luke 3:23:

And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age. . . .

A more proper translation of this verse from the Greek is, "and Jesus was about thirty years old when he began. . . ." The Aramaic omits "began" and simply reads, "and Jesus was about thirty years old." This implies that Jesus was not yet thirty years old when he was baptized by John.

Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed documents Biblically, historically, and astronomically that Jesus Christ was born on September 11, 3 B.C., the first day of the

Three scriptures in the Gospels corroborate the spring of 27 A.D. as the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry.

Judean new year, Tishri 1. This was the Day of Trumpets, when the trumpets blew from sunrise to sunset heralding *Jehovah* as King. The Day of Trumpets began the regnal, or civil, years of the kings of Judah. The trumpets on that day heralded God as King over all; but, unknown to the people at that time, they also heralded the birth of God's Son, the promised king of Israel.³

Jesus Christ was born on Tishri 1 in 3 B.C. By Judean reckoning, he was considered a year old on the day of his birth since that began his first year. On Tishri 1 in 2 B.C. he began his second year and was considered two years old. Counting forward, his thirtieth year would have begun on Tishri 1, or September 20, in the autumn of 27 A.D.⁴ Therefore, Jesus would have been "about thirty" in the spring of 27 A.D. when he came to be baptized by John the Baptist.

The second significant verse which verifies 27 A.D. as the year of Jesus Christ's baptism is Luke 3:1: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. . . ."

Nisan was the beginning of the sacred year for the Judeans, while Tishri was the beginning of their civil year. Kings' reigns were determined by the civil calendar, including the reign of foreign kings. The Judeans also took

into account the years that a king had a co-reign with his predecessor. If a king declared his son to be king before he himself died, then the years of the reign of the king's son would include the years of the co-reign, the years before his father died. The first portion of a year of the co-reign prior to Tishri 1 was counted as his first full year of reign. All other years were reckoned from Tishri 1 to Tishri 1. Tiberius had a co-reign with Caesar Augustus for about two years beginning on October 23, 12 A.D. So by Judean reckoning the fifteenth year of Tiberius would coincide with Jesus' twenty-ninth year: October 2, 26 A.D., to September 20, 27 A.D., which includes the spring of 27 A.D. when Jesus came to be baptized by John.⁵

The third important verse which establishes Jesus Christ's beginning as the lamb of God in the spring of 27 A.D. is John 2:20.

John 2:20:

Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

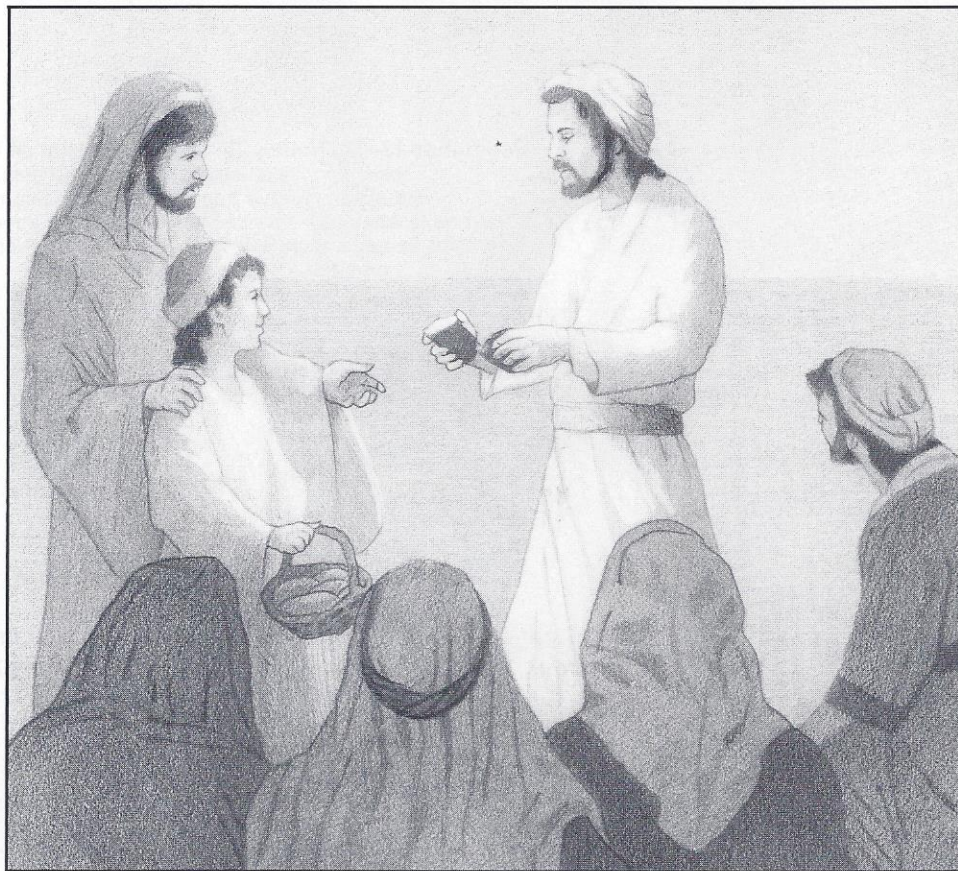
While Jesus was attending the Pass-

5. For a complete discussion of the reigns of Judean kings, see Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), p. 52.

over, as recorded in John 2:13, he was approached by the rulers of the Temple. This event occurred within two weeks of John's calling Jesus the Lamb of God. In the ensuing conversation with Jesus, the rulers stated that the Temple had been under construction for forty-six years. Since the Temple was a sacred matter, the years were reckoned from Nisan to Nisan rather than Tishri to Tishri. The year in which Herod began the construction of the Temple was between Nisan 1, 19 B.C. and Nisan 1, 18 B.C.⁶ This was the first year of the building of the Temple by Judean reckoning on their sacred calendar. Counting forward to the forty-sixth year brings us to the year between Nisan 1 (March 28) in 27 A.D. and Nisan 1 (April 15) in 28 A.D. Hence, the testimony of the Judeans corroborates the spring of 27 A.D. as the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry.

The three verses we have just seen, namely Luke 3:23, Luke 3:1, and John 2:20, all show that the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry occurred in the spring of the year 27 A.D. Counting forward from the birth of Jesus Christ in 3 B.C. to the time when he was "about thirty" (Luke 3:23) brings us to the

6. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, p. 279.



Feeding about Five Thousand (*John 6:9-13*)

3. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Our Promised Seed* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1982), pp. 75-83.

4. It must be remembered that in our modern dating, there is no year "0." 1 B.C. is directly followed by 1 A.D.

The Ministry of Jesus Christ

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John 2:13-

John 5:1-

John 6:4-

John 7:2,10-

John 10:22-

1st Week

7th week

62nd week

70th week

February 16, Shebat 20: Baptism of Jesus

First voice from heaven
Forty days of temptations

March 28, Nisan 1: Jesus returns to John after temptations (John 1:29)

April 2, Nisan 6: Wedding at Cana
April 10-17, Nisan 14-21: Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread

Jesus and disciples baptize in Judea.
Jesus passes through Samaria; woman at well near Sychar.
Jesus returns to Cana; second miracle in Galilee.
John imprisoned around Pentecost.

June 1, Sivan 7: Pentecost June 7, Sivan 13: Teaching in Nazareth

Matthew 4:12-17; Luke 16:16
Summer—full of teaching, healing, casting out devils,
miracles around Galilee. Capernaum was Jesus' headquarters.
He also sends out the twelve with power.

August 7, Ab 15: Feast of Wood Offering; over 5000 fed

September 20, Tishri 1: Jesus thirty years old

September 29, Tishri 10: Transfiguration

Second voice from heaven

Luke 9:28-36

October 4-11, Tishri 15-22: Feast of Tabernacles

Jesus sends out the seventy with power.

December 13-20, Kislev 25-Tebeth 2: Feast of Dedication

Jesus spends much of the winter in Perea.
He raises Lazarus from the dead at Bethany.
Then he teaches as he passes for one last time through Judea,
then Samaria, then Galilee, then Perea, then Jericho—
on his way to Jerusalem for Passover.

27 A.D.						
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28 A.D.

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spring of 27 A.D. The fifteenth year of Tiberius in Luke 3:1 was, on the civil calendar, the year beginning Tishri 1 (October 2), 26 A.D. and ending Tishri 1 (September 20), 27 A.D. Furthermore, the forty-sixth year of the building of the Temple in John 2:20 brings us, on the sacred calendar, to the year beginning Nisan 1 (March 28) in 27 A.D. and ending Nisan 1 (April 15) in 28 A.D. Since the dialogue on the building of the Temple took place during the Passover, Jesus Christ's beginning as the lamb of God occurred in the spring of 27 A.D. Luke 3:1 and 23; and John 2:20 are the only verses in the Word of God that date the beginning of Jesus Christ's ministry, and all three of them agree on the spring of 27 A.D.

In addition, the records of the feasts in the Gospel of John corroborate the one-year ministry of Jesus Christ. The Gospel of John is the only Gospel that records the major Judean feasts that indicate the times and seasons of the year which transpired during Jesus Christ's ministry in Palestine. The erroneous interpretation of these feasts has expanded the time of Jesus Christ's ministry to the traditionally accepted three-and-one-half years.

John 2:13:

And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In the first feast (John 2:13—3:21) Jesus is at Jerusalem during the Passover, Nisan 14 (April 10), 27 A.D. This is about two months after his baptism. The next feast (John 5:1-47) shows Jesus at Jerusalem again.

John 5:1:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

This feast is not named. Many have guessed that it was Passover. But it could not have been another Passover if the course of Jesus Christ's ministry covered only a year. In the course of a year, the next major feast following Passover is Pentecost. It is more reasonable to assume that it was Pentecost.

In John 6:4, the Passover is again mentioned.

John 6:4:

And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

The surrounding context says nothing about Jesus' going to Jerusalem for this feast. Yet, every male in Israel was required to go to Jerusalem for Passover in order to fulfill the law. Since Jesus went to all the other feasts as required by law, this inconsistency points to a textual forgery here in verse 4. Greek

manuscript 472 and others do not have the verse.⁷ Origen, a third-century theologian, omits the word "Passover" when alluding to this verse.⁸ Omitting the words "the passover," as Origen does, the verse reads, "And a feast of the Jews was nigh." The only Judean feast in the late summer for which Jesus would not have to go to Jerusalem was a feast called the Feast of Wood Offering, which was not mentioned in the Old Testament law. This feast occurred yearly on Ab 15 during which the people gathered wood and brought it to the Temple. The origin of the feast is ob-

scure, but it was popular in the first century. In 27 A.D. Ab 15 corresponded with August 7. This was not a major Judean feast, but it was observed by many. The absence of a name for the feast in John 6:4 evidently prompted scribes to insert a name later, such as "the Passover," or the verse was never in the original and was deliberately added by someone wanting to substantiate another Passover during Jesus' ministry. Its occurrence during the time of Jesus' feeding the "about five thousand" fits chronologically with the details of his summer ministry in Galilee as recorded in the other Gospels.

The next major Judean feast that follows the Feast of Wood Offering is the Feast of Tabernacles, which occurred on Tishri 15-22 or October 4-11 in 27 A.D. *John 7:2 and 10:*

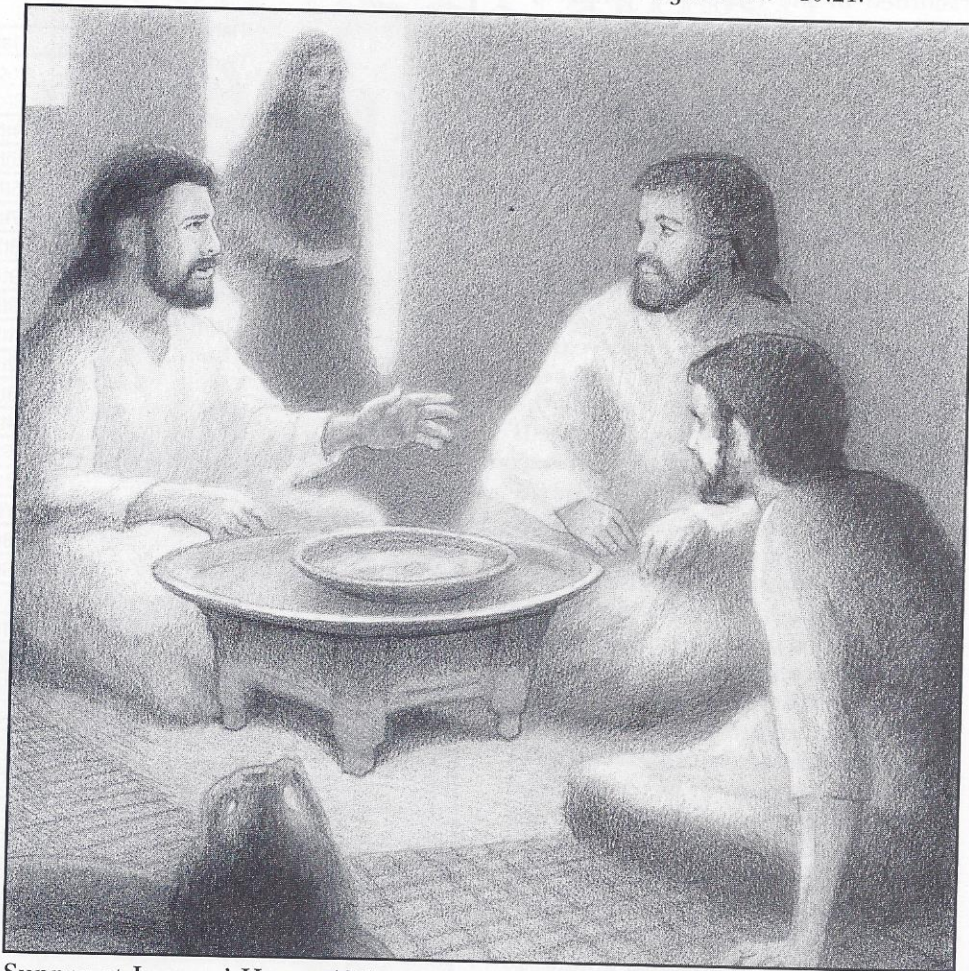
Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand.

But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

The events which occurred at the Feast of Tabernacles in 27 A.D. are recorded in John 7:1—10:21.

7. Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland, eds., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 26 ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1979); see note on John 6:4.

8. Other evidence for its omission comes from Irenaeus (second century). In his writings, he disputes the idea that Christ had a ministry of one year by listing three Passovers: the one in John 2, the unnamed feast of John 5 (assuming it was a Passover), and the Passover of John 12. John 6:4 must not have been in the manuscript Irenaeus was using, for it would certainly have supported his argument if it had been there. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), "Irenaeus against Heresies," chapter 22, 3; 1:390, 391. See Westcott and Hort's notes on John 6:4. B.F. Westcott and E.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (London: MacMillan Co., 1909), p. 585.



Supper at Lazarus' House (*John 12:1 and 2*)

The next feast recorded in John is the Feast of Dedication, Kislev 25 (December 13), 27 A.D.

John 10:22:

And it was at Jerusalem the feast of dedication, and it was winter.

The events at this feast are recorded in John 10:22-39. This feast commemorated the cleansing of the Temple in 164 A.D. during the time of the Maccabees.


The final feast during Jesus Christ's ministry was the Passover in 28 A.D., which is recorded in John 12 and following.

John 12:1:

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the law, offering himself without spot or blemish as a lamb of the first year.

This was the Passover at which Jesus Christ was the Passover lamb. The feasts recorded in the Gospel of John corroborate the one-year ministry of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God.

Approximately two months after Jesus' baptism, he arrived in Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, the first feast in the Gospel of John. At this feast the Judeans told Jesus that the Temple had been under construction for forty-six years. By Judean reckoning on their sacred calendar, this Passover occurred on Nisan 14 (April 10), in 27 A.D. This Passover was also during the year in which Jesus was "about thirty" years old and during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius. The next feast Jesus attended at Jerusalem that year was Pentecost on June 1, after which he began to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus was not required by the law to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of Wood Offering, so he stayed in Galilee and continued to minister there. In the fall he went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles, so he kept the law by attending each of the three major feasts. Then he returned to Jerusalem for the Feast of Dedication in December, and finally, once again in Jerusalem for the Passover at which he was crucified. This final Passover began on Wednesday, Nisan 14 (April 28) in 28 A.D. So Jesus Christ fulfilled the law, offering himself without spot or blemish as a lamb of the first year. 

The Forty-Six Years of John 2:20

Nisan 1, 19 B.C.	1st
Nisan 1, 18 B.C.	2nd
Nisan 1, 17 B.C.	3rd
Nisan 1, 16 B.C.	4th
Nisan 1, 15 B.C.	5th
Nisan 1, 14 B.C.	6th
Nisan 1, 13 B.C.	7th
Nisan 1, 12 B.C.	8th
Nisan 1, 11 B.C.	9th
Nisan 1, 10 B.C.	10th
Nisan 1, 9 B.C.	11th
Nisan 1, 8 B.C.	12th
Nisan 1, 7 B.C.	13th
Nisan 1, 6 B.C.	14th
Nisan 1, 5 B.C.	15th
Nisan 1, 4 B.C.	16th
Nisan 1, 3 B.C.	17th
Nisan 1, 2 B.C.	18th
Nisan 1, 1 B.C.	19th
Nisan 1, 1 A.D.	20th
Nisan 1, 2 A.D.	21st
Nisan 1, 3 A.D.	22nd
Nisan 1, 4 A.D.	23rd
Nisan 1, 5 A.D.	24th
Nisan 1, 6 A.D.	25th
Nisan 1, 7 A.D.	

Nisan 1, 7 A.D.	26th
Nisan 1, 8 A.D.	27th
Nisan 1, 9 A.D.	28th
Nisan 1, 10 A.D.	29th
Nisan 1, 11 A.D.	30th
Nisan 1, 12 A.D.	31st
Nisan 1, 13 A.D.	32nd
Nisan 1, 14 A.D.	33rd
Nisan 1, 15 A.D.	34th
Nisan 1, 16 A.D.	35th
Nisan 1, 17 A.D.	36th
Nisan 1, 18 A.D.	37th
Nisan 1, 19 A.D.	38th
Nisan 1, 20 A.D.	39th
Nisan 1, 21 A.D.	40th
Nisan 1, 22 A.D.	41st
Nisan 1, 23 A.D.	42nd
Nisan 1, 24 A.D.	43rd
Nisan 1, 25 A.D.	44th
Nisan 1, 26 A.D.	45th
Nisan 1, 27 A.D.	46th
Nisan 1, 28 A.D.	

March 28, 27 A.D.

April 15, 28 A.D.

Time dealing with sacred matters was counted by years beginning with the month of Nisan. The years of the construction of the Temple are an example of a sacred matter. John 2:20 was spoken at Passover in Nisan of the forty-sixth year of the building of the Temple. The year 19 B.C. is determined from dates given by Josephus, a first-century Judean historian.

Tishri 1, 3 B.C. September 11, 3 B.C.
1st year of Jesus Christ

Tishri 1, 2 B.C.	2nd
Tishri 1, 1 B.C.	3rd
Tishri 1, 1 A.D.	4th
Tishri 1, 2 A.D.	5th
Tishri 1, 3 A.D.	6th
Tishri 1, 4 A.D.	7th
Tishri 1, 5 A.D.	8th
Tishri 1, 6 A.D.	9th
Tishri 1, 7 A.D.	10th
Tishri 1, 8 A.D.	11th
Tishri 1, 9 A.D.	12th
Tishri 1, 10 A.D.	13th
Tishri 1, 11 A.D.	14th
Tishri 1, 12 A.D.	15th
Tishri 1, 13 A.D.	16th
Tishri 1, 14 A.D.	17th
Tishri 1, 15 A.D.	18th
Tishri 1, 16 A.D.	19th
Tishri 1, 17 A.D.	20th
Tishri 1, 18 A.D.	21st
Tishri 1, 19 A.D.	22nd
Tishri 1, 20 A.D.	23rd
Tishri 1, 21 A.D.	24th
Tishri 1, 22 A.D.	25th
Tishri 1, 23 A.D.	26th
Tishri 1, 24 A.D.	27th
Tishri 1, 25 A.D.	28th
Tishri 1, 26 A.D.	29th
Tishri 1, 27 A.D.	30th
Tishri 1, 28 A.D.	

Jesus about Thirty (Luke 3:23) and The Fifteenth Year of Tiberius (Luke 3:1)

1st year of Tiberius

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

9th

10th

11th

12th

13th

14th

15th

16th

17th

18th

19th

20th

21st

22nd

23rd

24th

25th

26th

27th

28th

29th

30th

31st

32nd

33rd

34th

35th

36th

37th

38th

39th

40th

41st

42nd

43rd

44th

45th

46th

47th

48th

49th

50th

51st

52nd

53rd

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56th

57th

58th

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67th

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69th

70th

71st

72nd

73rd

74th

75th

76th

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78th

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81st

82nd

83rd

84th

85th

86th

87th

88th

89th

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92nd

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94th

95th

96th

97th

98th

99th

100th

101st

102nd

103rd

104th

105th

106th

107th

108th

109th

110th

111st

112nd

113rd

114th

115th

116th

117th

118th

119th

120th

121st

122nd

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148th

149th

150th

151st

152nd

153rd

154th

155th

156th

157th

158th

159th

160th

161st

162nd

163rd

164th

165th

166th

167th

168th

169th

170th

171st

172nd

173rd

174th

175th

176th

177th

178th

179th

180th

181st

182nd

183rd

184th

185th

186th

187th

188th

189th

190th

191st

192nd

193rd

194th

195th

196th

197th

198th

199th

200th

201st

202nd

203rd

204th

205th

206th

207th

208th

209th

210th