

Beauties of the Truth

*A Forum for the Publication of Scriptural Viewpoints
Thought to be Harmonious with God's Plan of the Ages
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BEAUTIES OF THE TRUTH is published as a service to the brethren to stimulate their consideration and appreciation of the boundless riches of God's Word. It is published free of charge. Subscriptions will be entered for all who request it. Address all correspondence to: Beauties of the Truth, 10034 S.W. 52nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97219. Editorial Board: Brs. Jerry Leslie (Managing Editor), Carl Hagensick, Raymond Luke, Michael Nekora, David Rice, Richard Suraci.

A Difference Between Bulls and Goats

While religious Jews the world over look forward to the Atonement Day, Christians view the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the beginning of that day. The purpose of that day is to make atonement with the LORD.

On the annual Atonement Day of the Jewish Age, the high priest was to offer first a bullock {1} as a sin-offering to make atonement for himself and his house. Then he was to take one of two goats and offer it as a sin-offering to make atonement for the people. (**Leviticus 16:6,27**) Then the high priest confessed the iniquities of the people upon the head of the goat rejected for sacrifice, and it was let loose in the desert (verse 21). Finally, he offered a burnt-offering each for the two animals accepted for sacrifice (verse 24).

Where did these animals come from? The two billy-goats were to be taken from the children of Israel, as was just one burnt-offering ram. But the bullock and its burnt-offering were not; they were brought by Aaron. (**Leviticus 16:3**) {2} Why were the two sets of animals from different origins?

We may first consider what the significances are for the two sacrifices and the live atonement. **Hebrews 13:10-12** speaks of the Day of Atonement. (1) 'We have an altar, {3} whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as a sin-offering, are burned {4} without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people through his own blood, suffered without the gate [of Jerusalem].' **Hebrews 9:28** adds (2), 'Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of the many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin-offering, to them that wait for him, unto salvation.' **Romans 3:25** says (3) God sent forth Christ Jesus 'to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime.' Thus, Jesus (1) is foreshadowed in the bullock, (2) the church ('them that wait for him') are pictured in the high priest or in his house, and (3) the sin-offering was to cleanse from all past sins (both in shadow and in reality).

EZEKIEL TESTIFIES

Of what is the departing goat {5} a shadow? Of which it is commanded, 'Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away... and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land'. (**Leviticus 16:10; 20:22**) **Ezekiel 44:10-14** identifies this shadow in detail. 'But the Levites that went far from me, when Israel went astray, that went astray from me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be {6} ministers in my sanctuary... Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and became a stumbling block of iniquity unto the house of Israel... and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to execute the office of priest unto me... but they shall bear their shame, and their abominations which they have committed.' By implication, many Christians during the Gospel Age cause people to worship idols of organizations and great leaders (good or bad), but these will bear the iniquities they have caused others to commit. (Those sins which they have caused others to commit will not remain on the heads of people who in ignorance committed them.) Thus are these Christians rejected for sacrifice, although they have this secondary role in atonement. (cf. **Leviticus 16:10**) [There is here a lesson for each of us: Do I, through fear or band-wagon emotion, urge others to bow down to even the best of Christian leaders or organizations? Cooperation is good, but it should be based on in-common looking to the Lord for direction.]

What, then, of the Lord's goat, which had a common origin with the goat rejected for sacrifice, but a common destination to be sacrificed as the bullock? Both the little flock and the great multitude come from the world of Adamic sin, but the former sacrifice, following in the footsteps of their master, continually applying the fullers' soap to each new stain in the imputed robe of Christ's righteousness. (**Malachi 3:2**) {7} These are the faithful priests, 'the sons of Zadok {8} that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me; and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, {9} saith the Lord GOD'. (**Ezekiel 44:15-16**) Walking in His footsteps, then, as Jesus suffered without the literal gate, 'Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach'. (**Hebrews 13:13**)

It remains to ask, What merit is shown in the blood offered in the Most Holy? The Atonement Day shadow by itself does not answer that question; we look to the New Testament for an explanation. In that Jesus Christ offered up himself 'once for all', (**Hebrews 7:27**) he must be the source of the merit. And 'all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment'. (**Isaiah 64:6**) Thus, the church's part in the sinoffering may be likened to a pauper's daughter, who marries a wealthy king; she brings no wealth to the wedding, but she thenceforth joins the king in bestowing the benefits of the treasury on behalf of the subjects of the kingdom.

ANOTHER 1-2 SHADOW

There is a parallel to one fatted bullock from one source and two skinny goats from another source. In the Feast of Weeks, (**Leviticus 23:9-21**) on the first Sunday after the Nisan 14 Passover, the firstfruits were to be offered with one loaf of meal-offering (unleavened, as would be expected). But on the Sunday seven weeks later (the 50th day, hence called Pentecost) the later-crop firstfruits were to be offered with two leavened loaves of meal-offering. The LORD demonstrated the fulfillment of the type with the raising of Jesus from the dead on the first Sunday (AD 33 April 3) after Passover, and with the Holy Spirit given to the disciples on Pentecost (May 24), which began the Gospel Age of the church. Jesus, who inherited his rights from his father, God, was unleavened; but we, who inherited our rights from father Adam who sinned, are indeed leavened.

The principal lesson to be seen in the typical Day of Atonement is that it leads to atonement between God and man, for the priesthood (i.e., the faithful heavenly bride of Christ), for the Levites (i.e., the erratic, but ultimately overcoming, heavenly great multitude), and for all the people (i.e., ultimately the whole world of

mankind). A second lesson is also manifest: Atonement is to be accomplished in two stages, the Gospel Age for the church, and the Millennial Resurrection Kingdom for the whole rest of Adam's fallen race. Thus, if we keep in mind our own fallen nature in the present Day of Atonement, we will continue to appreciate our need of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer, we will 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling' (and not with overconfidence), and we will be patient even now with those who miss the mark as Christians, and with the unregenerate world, looking ahead to their day of redemption.

- James Parkinson

{1} Literally, a young bull, a son of plowing horned cattle (or oxen).

{2} Perhaps from the flocks of the priesthood. Jewish tradition has it that the priests bred a pure unblemished strain which was used exclusively for the tabernacle services.

{3} Most offerings were to be for the priesthood to eat of, (**Leviticus 7**) and even of some sin-offerings, but the Atonement Day sin-offerings were not to be eaten by anyone.

{4} The expression 'without the camp' can mean either beyond the tents of Israel or in the buffer zone between the tabernacle and the tents of the Levites; context and common sense should decide in each case.

{5} Or, goat for Azazel, or, goat for removal (or, for departure).

{6} The non-priests of the sons of Kohath, and Gershom and Merari, so served the tabernacle. (**Numbers 3**)

{7} The latter group, to be 'the great multitude in heaven,' must ultimately fully wash 'their robes, and make them white in the blood of the lamb'. (**Revelation 7:9, 13-17; 19:1**)

{8} The name means 'Righteous.'

{9} The fat and the blood were both offered in the sin-offerings of the Atonement Day, (**Leviticus 16:14,15,25**) but the bodies of the sin-offerings (bullock and LORD's goat) were burned without the camp.

Zechariah's Horses

"I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white. Then said I, O my lord, what are these? And the angel that talked with me said unto me, I will show thee what these be. And the man that stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. And they answered the angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth, and, behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest. Then the angel of the LORD answered and said, O LORD of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years? And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words." (**Zechariah 1:8-13**)

A disquieting vision of a fertile brush land in which a mounted cavalry is on night patrol opens Zechariah's prophecy (1:8-11). While it is not unusual to find a prophet stunned by the power of prophetic image (**Isaiah 6:5; Eze 3:15; Da 7:15; Re 22:8**) it is unprecedented to find one of the Lord's angels needing comfort after participating in a prophetic vision: 'And the LORD answered the angel that talked with me with good words and comfortable words'. (**Zechariah 1:13**)

Here we gain insight into the emotional commitment of the holy angels as they observe the 'theater' of our fallen state. (**1 Corinthians 4:9**) Yet, the question arises, 'Why was the angel so disturbed by this vision?' The first characteristic drawn to our attention is that this cavalry rides horses of various colors. There are direct links to Chapter Six of Zechariah where we meet a related but distinctly different set of colored horses harnessed to chariots. What are these horses, their colors, their different uses, and the relation of Chapters One and Six?

MANKIND'S INNER MOTIVATING ENERGY

When the subject of horses was treated in the broadest sense, an earlier article suggested 'Horses seem to be an image for mankind's inner motivating energy' ('Horses Ready for Battle,' Beauties of the Truth, August 1997). Hence, this horsepower is a psychological energy. It is that special portion of the general physical energy that mankind draws on for motivation. Such horsepower can be directed for good or for harm, as doctrine true or false can be directed for good or harm. For harm, this horsepower can motivate us to literally pick fights, or aggressively and blindly pursue false religion, ill-gotten wealth, licentiousness, sinful pleasure, or 'unbridled' power. Indeed, the survival of this metaphor 'unbridled power' in English suggests the general sense of the interpretation of horses as a metaphor for our inner motivating energy.

This motivating energy may be religious doctrine, and it may be broader than doctrine. Clearly, horses cannot always picture doctrine. In **Isaiah 30** we find that the Lord asks us to visualize a herd of horses desperately swimming through floods of waters with their bridles of error barely holding their jaws above these floods. Here we learn this serves as a direct image of the Assyrians and other nations against whom the Lord of Hosts has indignation. 'Behold, the name of the LORD cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err'. (**Isaiah 30:27-28**)

On the other hand, exercised positively, 'horsepower' opens our hearts to the good things of the Lord. 'Horsepower' revitalizes us to go to an evening ecclesia meeting even after a day where we have missed deadlines, listened through the petty arguments of our co-workers, interceded for our children at school, had

our hands full as our toddler's fever kept us up through the night. For the Christian, horses are the driving power of our consecrated living. They picture the Holy Spirit in action.

ZECHARIAH ONE

The table included in this study presents the general outline for the suggested interpretations of these horses, offering some guidance for interpretation of the horses' colors in **Zechariah 1:8-17** that reconciles these colors with **Zechariah 6:1-8**. Several aspects of the first chapter suggest that this scene in Zechariah Chapter One focuses on the sad period of papal domination that arrested progress in Europe. During these 'Dark Ages,' the seeds of reformation germinated unseen below the soil of culture.

First, let us consider an alternate interpretation of the vision in Chapter One. One line of interpretation holds that this chapter deals with the promised blessings of the kingdom. From this perspective:

* The leader of this cavalry band, a rider on a red or Adam-colored horse, announces that this cavalry was sent to do the Lord's bidding; these are they whom the LORD hath sent to walk to and fro through the earth. He reports that the whole earth is at rest. (**Zechariah 1:11**) If these words of the rider are truthful, kingdom blessings are surely intended. However, both the 'eyes of the LORD' (**Zechariah 4:10**) and Satan (**Job 1:7**) pass 'to and fro' through the earth. The act of patrolling the earth provides no clue as to the true character or mission of the red cavalry rider. However, this claim of operating at the Lord's command seems to close any further argument as to authority.

* Seemingly this setting in the kingdom gains strength from the linkage of 'red' to the ancient worthies, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Daniel and other heroes of faith. These are foreshadowed in the tabernacle under the image of a 'red' or 'Adam-colored' heifer picturing sin. (**Numbers 19:2**)

* Myrtle trees suggest kingdom blessings. (**Isaiah 41:19,55:13**)

Let us note that when the angel invites the prophet to see what will transpire, (**Zechariah 1:9**) we need to be cautious about believing everything we hear. However appealing this interpretation is, it creates a number of difficulties:

* This is a vision of the night; (**Zechariah 1:8**) the kingdom is a period of light.

* The angel now needs comfort. Something in this picture clearly upsets the angel. Why is this so if this truly is a picture of kingdom blessings under the stewardship of the ancient worthies? Is it possible that the angel was startled to hear the boast from the rider on the red horse? Rather, the words of the rider, 'behold all the earth sitteth still and is at rest' (**Zechariah 1:11**) need to be weighed carefully as to their truth or falsehood. They may be a false boast similar to that found in **Revelation 12:10-11**. Indeed, they may be false boasts produced by the same propaganda machine of the medieval papacy we meet in **Revelation 12**.

* To these concerns is added the weight of the Lord's pronouncement that, 'I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction'. (**Zechariah 1:15**) The Lord promises a rebuilding. (**Zechariah 1:16-17**)

* Myrtle, as contrasted with the brier, is a picture of blessing. (**Isaiah 55:13**) But myrtle suggests blessings in unimproved soils or abandoned soils as in a devastated city. On unimproved soils it is preferable that the soil be held in place by the myrtle, whose sap perfumes the very axe that cuts it, rather than the thorny brier.

* Direct reference is made to the 70 years of desolation. (**Zechariah 1:12**) Why is this, if Chapter One pictures the kingdom? If, on the other hand, this really is a vision of the 70 years of desolation, we can see

the reason that the vision of the four carpenters is next presented. (**Zechariah 1:18-21**) This is the Lord's promise of rebuilding.

If this vision presents the boasts of the papacy during the middle ages, the following becomes reasonable:

* The night (**Zechariah 1:8**) directly links to the 70 years of desolation (**Zechariah 1:12**) when the church was in captivity in mystic Babylon.

* The man on the red horse is the 'Man of Sin.' He is supported by a long descent of papal pronouncements - the other red horses.

* The 'speckled' horses are the 'Man of Sin's' closest supporters, particularly the Cardinals and hierarchy. Of special interest, this word 'speckled' is defined by Strong's as being from 'hissing,' to which Gesenius adds 'mockery.' The translators suggest bright red, i.e., bay, as piercing to the sight. Literally this suggests the piercing red garments of the cardinals in the hierarchy. What this bright red mocks is the drab subdued color of true blood red.

* White horses picture the Great Company. This class falls to stay separate from Babylon. We note in Chapter Six that they nevertheless maintain faith in Jesus and receive the reward of a place in the North Country - the heavenly phase of the kingdom. However, if Chapter One presents a kingdom picture, how do the white horses get from the heavenly realm, to a patrol in the earthly realm?

* Black horses, clearly the favored horses of Chapter Six, are nowhere to be found in this vision - they have maintained themselves separate from Babylon. In all likelihood, they are the 'troublemakers' the night patrol is guarding against.

* Now the myrtle becomes significant, this patrol is watching the promising ground that is producing myrtles. Their intent: to maintain the 'status quo' and suppress the promise of nascent reform suggested by the myrtle.

* Hence, we should view Zechariah One as taking place during the 'bottom' (**Zechariah 1:8**) of the church's 70 year captivity (**Zechariah 1:12**) when the heathen, led by the 'red' man of sin, are at ease. (**Zechariah 1:15**)

ZECHARIAH SIX

The interpretation of Chapter Six will strengthen this interpretation of the horses.

'(1) And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. (2) In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; (3) And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. (4) Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? (5) And the angel answered and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. (6) The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. (7) And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. (8) Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north country have quieted my spirit in the north country'. (**Zechariah 6:1-8**)

* Let us consider how the chariots of **Zechariah 6** match one for one with the planes on the Chart of the Ages during the Messianic Age as presented in the 'Divine Plan of the Ages.' The two mountains of brass suggest the two kingdoms of perfect humanity, the first, the paradise lost by Adam, the second, the paradise restored through Christ.

* In the valley (of sin) between these kingdoms the red or 'Adam-colored' horses drawing a chariot appear prominently as in Chapter One. They are described as the 'first chariot.' They have an unusual distinction. Let us presume the chariots are traveling from east to west as do both the High Priest entering the tabernacle and the (apparent) path of the sun. Every other chariot passing through the valley goes to a destination either north (turning right) or South (turning left). However this chariot has no destination. How well this pictures that once these chariots pass through the valley of sin, there is no destination for the 'Adam-colored' horses. Neither Adamic sin nor the 'sin unto death' - the 'second death' - have a home beyond this valley. They simply go into oblivion.

* Black horses are clearly the favored horses of Chapter Six. We should give pause and consider that they 'quiet' the spirit of the Lord himself. (**Zechariah 6:8**) They constitute the 'second chariot.' Black is the same word used in Canticles 1:5 for 'I am black but comely.' Canticles also likens the beloved woman to the horses of Pharaoh's chariots, picturing the church class (Canticles 1:9). Linking these two verses together, we might expect a team of black horses harnessed to this chariot. Their destination is the north country or spiritual realms.

* The 'third chariot' is harnessed to white horses. This suggests the overcoming righteousness of the Great Company, a class clothed in white. (**Revelation 7:9**) They are shown as victors and appropriately they follow their black companions to the same destination in the spiritual realms. (**Psalms 45:14**)

* For the fourth chariot, the correspondence with the Chart of the Ages holds right down to the detail of two horses - Israel 'grisled' and the world 'bay' harnessed together in their journey to the 'south' country, or the 'restored world of mankind.' Neither of these colors appears in Chapter One. Both these colors are appropriate only to classes that have undergone restitution experiences.

COLOR	CHAPTER 6	CHAPTER 1	INTERPRETATION
Red, Strong # 122	6:2	1:8 (2x)	Adamic death, sinful class, 'Man of Sin' Strong-Red (Adam)
Bay, Strong # 554	6:3, 6:7	not used	Ancient Worthies and Restored Israel Strong - a strong color, red by implication
Grisled, Strong # 1261	6:3, 6:6	not used	Restored World of Mankind Strong - Spotted as if with hail
White, Strong # 3836	6:3, 6:6	1:8	Great Company Strong - White
Black, Strong # 7838	6:2, 6:6	not used	Church class, same word used in Canticles 1:5, 'I am black but comely.' / Strong - Dusky
Speckled, Strong # 8320	not used	1:8	'Man of Sin's' closest supporters: Cardinals and Hierarchy / Strong - [from 'hissing' or, Gesenius, 'mockery'] Bright red, i.e. bayas piercing to the sight.

FINAL THOUGHTS - PROPHETIC IMAGES, CODE OR AUTHORITY?

Here I would like to suggest a broad approach to prophetic image. Although 'suggested interpretations' are offered, I strongly believe the final authority for understanding prophetic image should return our vision to the image. When interpreting prophetic image sometimes we approach the Lord's word as if it is a secret code to be broken. That is, if we, through the Holy Spirit, can discern the one word that should be substituted for the image, all is well. Horns for power, and mountains for kingdoms are two images that fit this approach well enough. Our Lord's interpretation of parables, such as those found in **Matthew 13**, seemingly adds all the authority needed for this code-breaking approach.

However, the code-breaking approach runs into complications if we seek the single word for the image of horses. One such complication occurs when comparing horse in **Isaiah 30:27-28** where it means erring people and horse six verses later **Isaiah 31:1** where the sense of doctrines fits well enough. Rather than simply resigning to the conclusion that horse is being used in two different ways in these texts, I suggest reflecting on the image, walking around it, and trying to see it in three dimensions. When the image is studied topically, consider all the additional lessons the image suggests. Consider the dynamics of the image. Is the horse carrying a rider, hitched to a chariot, or swimming in a flooding stream? Each of these suggests a distinctly different aspect of the horse image. For 'horse,' the broad sense of motivation emerges from such an approach. But this should only serve as our earliest working definition. There are riches yet to be mined from this image as we return to it. Our Lord Jesus in interpreting his own parables has served as the guide for this essay. The interpretations offered are a point of entry into the parable, not an ending point.

Rather than breaking the code and reading the text with the one word we find, or developing a well-meant 'interpretive translation,' let us take a different approach. In this equally prayerful approach, we should reflect on the meanings that constellate around prophetic images such as 'horse,' 'horn,' or 'mountain.' In the end, let us resolve to soberly and cautiously return to the image with ever more depthful eyes of understanding to see if additional insights emerge with time. These images should point to universal truths. The image, and not our interpretation, should always retain the final authority. Search we may for many years, still some new rich gem appears.

- Richard Doctor

The Dates of Christ's Birth, Baptism, and Crucifixion

The Scriptures contain sufficient data to enable us to accurately determine the year when Jesus was born, and also the dates of his baptism and crucifixion. The present AD date, as fixed in the 6th century by Dionysius Exiguus for the beginning of the Christian Era, is now generally recognized to be in error by those who have given the matter careful study. Ussher's scheme of chronology, given in the margins of many Bibles, places the date of Jesus' birth 4 years earlier than AD 1; but we believe that the true date was only 1 1/4 years earlier, i.e., in Autumn 2 BC. {1} The Scriptural data proves, also, that Christ was baptized in Autumn 29 AD, and crucified in Spring 33 AD. These dates are corroborated by symbolical time-measurements in the Great Pyramid.

When John came preaching the baptism of repentance, all men were in expectation of the advent of the long-promised Messiah, and reasoned within themselves whether or not John was the Christ; (**Luke 3:15**) but John answered them, no, that Christ would come after him. (**John 1:15, 45**)

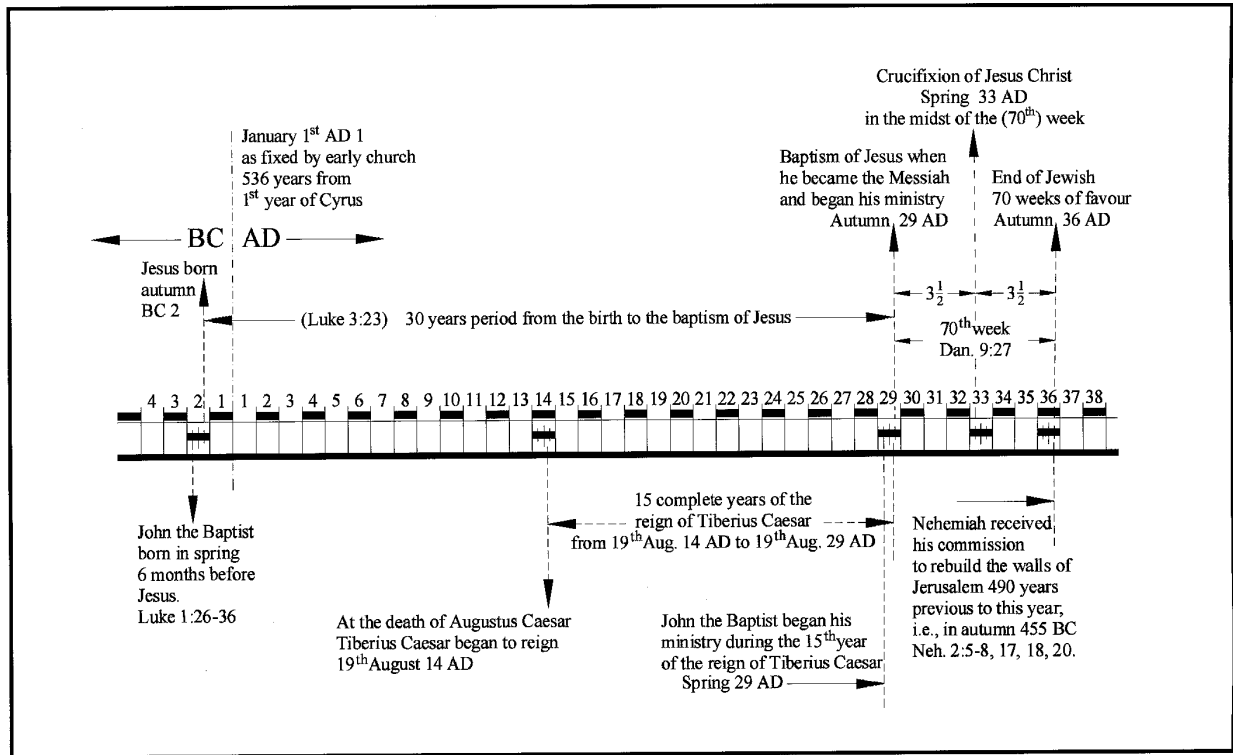
It was when Jesus was 30 years of age that he came forward to be baptised by John, (**Luke 3:21-23**) and from that time, being anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power, he began his ministry. (**Acts 10:36-38**)

Luke states (**Luke 3:1-3**) that it was in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar that John the Baptist started his ministry. Tiberius began to reign at the death of Augustus on the 19th of August in the year 14 AD, and his 15th year, therefore, extended from 19th August 28 AD, till 19th August 29 AD (see diagram).

Certain writers have taken as the starting point for Luke's reckoning the year 12 AD in which, they say, Tiberius was made co-regent with Augustus. There is no proof, however, that such a method of reckoning was ever used. None of the ancient ecclesiastical writers ever imagined that to be the meaning of the evangelist. Nowhere in histories, monuments, or coins of unquestioned authority, is there a trace of any other reckoning of the years of Tiberius Caesar, than from the death of Augustus on the 9th of August, 14 AD.

By comparing verses 13, 24-31, and 36, of the first chapter of Luke, it will be seen that Jesus was about 5 months younger than his cousin John the Baptist. According to the requirement of the Law Jesus could not begin his ministry until he was 30 years of age. (**Numbers 4:3, Lu 3:23**) As this requirement must have been equally binding upon John, it means that John began his ministry at 30 years of age 5 months before Jesus.

It cannot be supposed that Luke would have been so careful to fix the exact date of the commencement of John's ministry, had he not understood that he was at the same time fixing the date of the most important event in the history of the world, namely, the Advent of the Messiah.



Just as in the first chapter he connects the birth of Jesus with that of John, so in the 3rd chapter he connects the beginnings of their ministry. A more literal rendering of **Luke 3:23**, which supports this view, is given in Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott. After informing us (in the first three verses) when John began his ministry, Luke now desires to draw attention to the commencement of Jesus' iuŋ ministry, and (in verse 23) says: 'Also Jesus himself [like John] was about thirty years old [when he] began [his ministry]:' (The literal word for word rendering requires the insertion of the words in the brackets, in order to bring out the sense of the verse. The Greek word καὶ may be equally well translated 'and' or 'also.')

Now, as we have seen, John's ministry, beginning in the 15th year of Tiberius, must have dated from some time within the year commencing 19th August 28 AD, and Jesus' ministry, therefore, 5 months later, must have dated from some time within the year commencing 19th January 29 AD. It can be more particularly shown, however, that it was in the middle of the Israelitish year, i.e., in Autumn 29 AD, that Jesus was baptized and his ministry began. **Luke 1:5** states that John's father, Zacharias, was a priest of the course of Abia. On referring to **1 Chronicles 24:5-19** we find that the priests were divided into 24 courses, Abia being the 8th in order. During the twelve months of the year, which according to the commandment of God began in Spring, (**Deuteronomy 16:1, Ex 12:2**) each course in its order would require to serve in the temple for two weeks. (For a similar arrangement see **1 Kings 4:7**, also **1 Chronicles 27:1-15**) This would make Zacharias' term of office expire at the close of the 4th month.

Luke 1:8-13 states that it was while Zacharias was 'executing the priest's office in the order of his course' that an angel appeared and informed him that his wife would have a son whom he was to name John, and verses 23 and 24 go on to say: 'And it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministrations were accomplished, he departed to his own home. And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived and hid herself five months.' The succeeding verses show that at this time, at the commencement of the 6th month (i.e., at the commencement of the 10th month from the beginning of that year), the annunciation was made to the virgin Mary; and that when 'the days were accomplished that she should be delivered' (or 9 months

later), she 'brought forth her first-born son,' Jesus. (**Luke 2:6-7**) According to the above scriptural data Jesus must have been born in Autumn of the year 2 BC, 18 months (4 + 5 + 9 = 18) after the commencement of the (Israelitish) year in which the angel appeared to Zacharias as he performed the priestly office in the order of his course; and he was baptized 30 years later, in Autumn 29 AD, or 5 months after John the Baptist began his ministry in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar.

- *Morton Edgar*

{1} The once commonly accepted date for the birth of Jesus, 4 BC, is based upon the supposition that king Herod the Great died in the year 4 BC. If 4 BC was the true date of Herod's death, then according to **Matthew 2:16**, Jesus would have been born in either 4 or 5 BC. However, it is now apparent that Herod died in the opening part of 1 BC. The reasons are detailed in the landmark article 'The Chronology of the Reign of Herod the Great,' by William Filmer, Journal of Theological Studies, 1966, October. - Editor

Spurious Words

'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever Amen.]' (**Matthew 6:13**)

The bracketed words above are generally recognized as spurious by most students of the Bible. They are not in the oldest Greek manuscripts, the Sinaitic and the Vatican. Some comments by Pastor Russell are: 'The Kingdom or rule of the present time is not of God. Properly omitted by the Revised Version as being no part of the Scriptures' (**R5022:5 205022**). 'Added at a time when an earthly exaltation of the Church had led some to believe that the Papal glory was the glory of God's Kingdom' (**R2005:3 202005**).

There may be a subtle confirmation to this thought found in **Revelation 12:10**. 'And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night.' The false church says that the 'salvation, and the power, and the kingdom' has come; almost the same phrase (except backwards) as in the spurious or added verse in **Matthew 6:13**.

- *Mark Tribble*

Symbolisms of the Great Pyramid

Descending Passage = The downward course of 'This Present Evil World' to destruction.

Subterranean Chamber, or Pit = Destruction or Gehenna, that state of death from which there will be no awakening.

First Ascending Passage = The Israelitish Age; or the Law Dispensation during which the nation of Israel endeavored to gain life by the works of the Law.

Well-Shaft = The Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus Christ; or Hades, that state of death from which an awakening is assured because of the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Grand Gallery = The Gospel Age, the Grace Dispensation during which the High-Calling to membership in the Body of Christ is offered to the faithful; and the age when the Spirit-begotten New Creatures in Christ make their calling and election sure.

Ante-Chamber = The 'Holy' of the Tabernacle; the 'School of Christ'; the Spirit-begotten condition of those who have presented their bodies a living sacrifice to God.

King's Chamber = The 'Most Holy' of the Tabernacle; the 'Sanctuary'; the Divine Spirit nature; the Divine Reign of Christ.

Queen's Chamber = The condition of Human Perfection possessed by Adam before his fall; and which the 'Man Christ Jesus' laid down as a Ransom-sacrifice on behalf of the world; and the condition of the world of mankind after the Millennial Reign of Christ has completed the restitution work.

Horizontal Passage leading to the Queen's Chamber = The complete period of the world's history from the time of Adam, to the end of the Millennial reign of Christ; also the New (Law) Covenant which will be made operative with the restored nation of Israel and the world after the completion of the Body of Christ.

Granite in the Great Pyramid = The Spirit Nature; the Divine Law; the Divine Will of God.

Granite Plug = The Divine Law of God, which blocks the way to life even as the Granite Plug blocks the way up the First Ascending Passage.

Granite Leaf in the Ante-Chamber = The Divine Will of God, under which all who enter the 'School of Christ' must bow submissively.

Plane of Spirit Nature (Compare with the Chart of the Ages located in this section) is represented in the Great Pyramid by the level of the floor of the King's Chamber.

Plane of Human Perfection is represented by the level of the floor of the Queen's Chamber, which is also the level of the summit of the Well-shaft.

Plane of Human Depravity or Condemnation is represented by the level of the Subterranean Chamber or Pit.

- *Morton Edgar*

World Population

The following tables compare the world population groups in 1999 with those of 1886 as reported in Volume One, page 16. We observe that while Muslims are the fastest growing group, Jews are the smallest and a diminishing percentage. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. (1 Corinthians 1:27)

	1886				1999			
Roman Catholic	190,000,000	13.34%	}		1,044,236,000	17.46%	}	
Orthodox	84,000,000	5.90%		27.39%	213,991,000	3.58%		}
Protestant	116,000,000	8.15%		33.02%	715,844,000	11.98%		
<hr/>				<hr/>				
Jewish	8,000,000	0.56%	}		14,313,000	0.23%	}	
Muslim	170,000,000	11.94%		72.61%	1,155,109,000	19.32%		}
Other Non-Christian	856,000,000	60.11%		66.98%	2,834,908,000	47.42%		
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	1,424,000,000			5,978,401,000				

