

**Mysteries of Jesus' *Life*
Revealed**

Mysteries of Jesus' *Life* Revealed

–His Birth, Death, and Resurrection

*How Could the Church Have Gotten It
So Wrong?*

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*The Last Shofar!—What the Fall Feasts of the Lord
Are Telling the Church (2014)*]

A Beginning Word

There are mysteries in Jesus' life about His birth, death, burial, resurrection, and ascensions. Indeed, exactly *when* and *where* did they *really* happen?

Many of us are familiar with the navigational aids on our smart phones, iPads and in our cars. The quality of these electronic aids is seen in how reliable they are to bring us to our desired destination. Most of us have been surprised and annoyed when we arrive in a *farmer's field* instead of at the desired address.

For over two thousand years, the church has been misdirected to incorrect places and times of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. This has largely resulted from a poor navigational aid provided by Helena, Roman Emperor Constantine's mother (as well as Constantine himself). Neither an archeologist or Bible scholar, Helena set out to identify the places of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection during one of her trips to the Holy Land in the fourth century.

Unfortunately, the sites Helena and Constantine identified were erroneous, and yet the traditions have persisted. Since this was the unquestioned navigational aid available for most of church history, the church mistakenly has been taken to the "*farmer's field*" instead of to the *actual places* of Jesus' birth, death and resurrection as recorded in both Scripture and accurate historical documents.

Similarly, for various reasons, the church has gotten it wrong on the *dates* of these important events of Jesus' life.

Basically, the church has gotten it wrong from *not* following clues given in *Scripture*—as well as reliable witnesses in history—rather than listening to Helena and Constantine and others in church history (even today) who have not adequately searched the Scriptures for clues. To determine truth, *all* the statements in Scripture related to the subject must be in alignment. For example, we can't take one statement given in Scripture and run with it to draw a conclusion, without also considering *all* the other statements given in both the Old Testament and New Testaments which touch on that subject. Sometimes, the

clues are big and easy to understand, but, other times, they might seem small and insignificant. However, all the clues must be in alignment to determine truth. These clues are *our navigational aids* to use our analogy. They, like the Star of Bethlehem to the Magi, lead us to where we want to go in determining the correct information on the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We, of course, also pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us to truth. Historical documents which are accurate and which align with the clues given in Scripture can be helpful guides in our search. However, continually, the starting point and focus is on what Scripture teaches, and any historical documents consulted must be judged in light of what is stated in Scripture.

This book is an attempt to relook at the *dates* and *places* in Jesus' birth, death, burial, resurrection, and ascensions—and determine what is true. We can use the term “biblical sleuthing” for the process of searching Scripture for relevant clues; as such, we need to become “Sherlock Holmes” as we search for clues in Scripture. The clues might be thought of as *puzzle pieces* which need to be fitted together to arrive at a complete picture of truth. And, hence, this book uses an analogy of assembling *puzzle pieces* of topical information contained in the chapters to come up with the conclusions of our cases.

So, are we saying that we have *absolute truth* about the conclusions of our cases? No, but we do believe that the evidence laid out related to our cases for the dates and places in Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection is strong and the cases are worthy of serious consideration. However, as in any historical consideration, it is impossible to *totally prove* a case. In summary, we leave it to you to evaluate the strength of the evidence provided for the cases.

Some may question why this is all that important. After all, aren't these holy *sites* of the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus primarily symbolic anyway? And why do we need to know actual *dates*? We argue that to know Jesus as a real person, who was born and died in *real places* and *real times* in history, is of strategic importance in appreciating the *real Jesus* of the Bible. We believe that these “latest navigational aids” presented in this book help point us in the right direction in looking at the real history of Jesus. In so doing,

they help authenticate both the reality of Jesus and reliability of the Scriptures. For example, the *actual* place of the crucifixion makes the spiritual teachings in the Old Testament regarding the significance of the sacrificial Temple offerings apply specifically to Jesus. It further highlights the substitutionary role that Jesus played in his crucifixion in redeeming Israel and the world to the Father. The *proper place* of the crucifixion makes these parallels become crystal clear. Hence, this is important, and we will explain further in Part II, Section B, “*Where Was Jesus’ Death & Resurrection?*”

Mysteries of Jesus’ Life Revealed touches on many mysteries about Jesus which have become mumbled and jumbled in history. You will find that the information in the cases presented for the timing and places of Jesus’ birth, death, burial, resurrection, and ascensions is clearly arranged for you to evaluate, and the references for the sources of the information are given. Much of the information presented is from presently out-of-publication sources, and this book brings this information to the reader in a convenient format. Our presentations are arranged as “case studies.” Based on the evidence for the cases we make, you are invited to arrive at your own conclusions as to their credibility. Do we make our case? You can decide, much like a jury.

As a committed Bible and history researcher, I have attempted to approach this subject with the same dedication and burden from God which my co-author, Donald Zoller, and I employed when we researched and wrote our previous book with unique insights, *The Last Shofar!---What the Fall Feasts of the Lord are Telling the Church* (Xulon Press, 2014). Our *modus operandi* recommended for our readers is exemplified by the believers at Berea, as expressed by the Apostle Paul, “. . . they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so” (Acts 17:11). We encourage the same from our readers.

With reliance on the truth of Scripture and prayerful dependence on the Spirit of Truth for guidance, I have assembled the evidence for our cases. I realize that “new” ideas are often uncomfortable and difficult to accept. Yes, some of the “experts” will cast dispersion on the cases presented in this book. I expect that. After all, who am I to

be proposing alternate dates and places? I am not an academician or biblical scholar but a simple Bible researcher like the Bereans. Once again, I can state that the truth of Scripture is my ultimate guide.

As it is with most books of the type we have written, very little of the content I am presenting is original insight with me. Beyond the Scriptures, I have leaned heavily upon historical documents revealed in the works of other reliable researchers. These sources are carefully referenced for further study and investigation. It is recognized that some knowledge has been lost in history, but cases can be assembled from bits and pieces of what is known to arrive at the most-probable cases. I do not claim infallibility, and, once again, you can evaluate the credibility of the cases which are presented.

Of unique importance for the reader is to see that the events of the birth, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus all occurred on the specific days of the seven *Feasts of the Lord* (Leviticus 23) with their related significance. With the intrigue of a great mystery revealed, this book provides an insight as to how the Feasts are aligned to match perfectly with the *First Coming of Jesus* to earth, largely aligned with the four *Spring Feasts* on the Jewish calendar (Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost). In our previous book, *The Last Shofar!* (2014), we make the case for the *Second Coming of Jesus* fulfilling the three *Fall Feasts* (Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles).

About 1,900 years ago, the church began to leave its Hebraic foundations, and much has been lost as far as correct biblical understanding. Messianic Rabbi Avi Ben Mordechai states the following in the Introduction to his insightful book, *Messiah Volume 2: Understanding His Life and Teachings in Hebraic Context* (1997):

Thus, as Hebraic thought was replaced with pagan ideas, the image of HaMashiach (the Messiah) also changed from that of a Torah-true Jewish Rabbi to that of a *goyishe* [Hebraic slang term that means lacking Jewishness or Jewish character] Christian. The result? HaMashiach was stripped of His Jewishness and was unfortunately reduced to something other

than what He was prophesied to be in *D'varim* (Deuteronomy) 18:18 and *Yochanan* (John) 1:17:

'(The L-rd speaking to Moshe [Moses]): *I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.*'

'For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.'^{aaaa} [Avi Ben Mordechai, *Messiah Volume 2: Understanding the Life and Teachings in Hebraic Context* (Millennium 7000 Communications Int'l; 1997; 269 pages), p. 17.; clarifications in brackets mine.]

God's redemptive plan for mankind focuses on Jesus Christ. As found in the biblical record, God has fixed the times and places to reveal His plan in history. The discerning eye will see how God uses the *Feasts of the Lord* (Leviticus 23) to announce to the people of Israel and to the world the unfolding of His plan of redemption—a plan that is anchored in time, place and history to a real Jesus—with His birth, death, resurrection, and His coming again in the future.

It is our hope and prayer that the teachings in this book, *Mysteries of Jesus' Life Revealed*, will find a place in your heart as you consider once again the historical reality of God's magnificent Son. *"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that that we might receive adoption as sons"* (Galatians 4:4).

The purpose of this book is to move Jesus from the *"farmer's field"* of symbolism into the light of reality and truth, being born and having died as a real person in real times and places in history. I believe this investigation will encourage and strengthen your faith and your love for Jesus. This has certainly been true for me.

In summary, Jesus is the most important person in history and in our lives. Let's get His *real* history correct, including His birthdate and

place of His birth as well as the correct days and places of His crucifixion, burial, resurrection, and ascensions. These are largely knowable, and they help to correctly set up the rest of the history of His life and ministry. The information is available in the Bible as well as in recorded history when correctly assembled. Unfortunately, due to false church traditions, they have been hidden in plain sight for centuries.

Now, let's assemble the various *puzzle pieces* to come up with the conclusions for our cases for His birth, death, and resurrection.

I pray that you will be blessed by the presentations in this book. To God be the glory.

Part I:
Mysteries of Jesus' *Birth*
Revealed

Introduction to Mysteries of Jesus' *Birth* Revealed

“Oh, little town of Bethlehem . . .” is a tune all of us know. We have heard it sung each traditional Christmas season related to the birth of Jesus. It is a nice tune and is accurate for depicting the town of Bethlehem, the City of David, as the birthplace of Jesus—the hope for the entire world.

There are, however, mysteries to be revealed. Mysteries like: Was Jesus born on the traditional day of Christmas? If not, then what day? And exactly where in Bethlehem was He born?

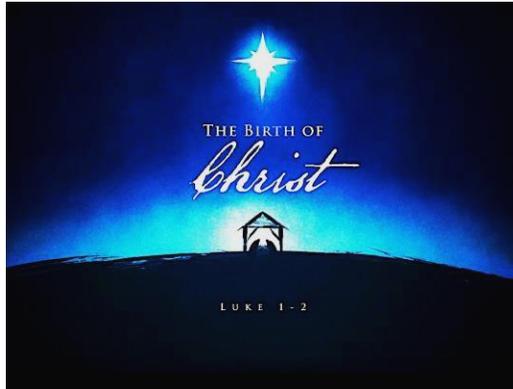
This **Part I: Mysteries of Jesus' *Birth* Revealed** deals with the mysteries related to the *birth* of Jesus and is divided into two sections. **Section A**, “*When Was Jesus Born?*”, introduces the case for the *actual birth date* of Jesus, and **Section B**, “*Where Was Jesus Born?*”, presents the case for His *actual birthplace* “in Bethlehem.”

We present our cases based on clues from Scripture and reliable historical documents for each of these two questions. I will be assembling various *puzzle pieces* to arrive at our conclusions. You will see clearly that the cases presented do *not* agree with *traditional* dates and locations.

I believe the evidence of the cases presented is strong, and you can evaluate the evidence presented to make your own decision as to the validity of the cases presented.

Part I: Mysteries of Jesus' *Birth* Revealed

Section A: *When Was Jesus Born?*



When Was Jesus Born?



Introduction to Section A When Was Jesus Born?

Our case is that Jesus was born on Wednesday, *Tishri 1* (September 11) of 3 BC—on the Feast of Trumpets (Hebrew: *Yom Teruah*; also called *Rosh HaShannah*). Jesus was not born on December 25, AD 1, which has become church tradition. Overwhelming evidence is provided for this case.

Not even the Pope believes in the traditional Christmas as the birthdate of Jesus! Yes, it's true. Even Pope Benedict disputes Jesus' traditional date of birth. *December 25, AD 1*? Forget it! Absolutely, that was *not* the birth date of Jesus.

Well, the former Pope Benedict XVI in his book, *Jesus' Childhood* (2012)—Part III of his series, *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives*—admittedly, did not exactly put it that way, but he did reveal that Jesus may have been born *earlier* than previously thought. He explains in his book that Dionysius Exiguus (AD 470–AD 544), a sixth century monk who is considered the originator of the Christian calendar, “. . . made a mistake in his

calculations by several years. The actual date of Jesus' birth was *several years before*" (emphasis mine).

So, there you have it—even the former Pope admits that the *December 25, AD 1* date for "Christmas" is *not* the actual date! ¹ [Sorcha Pollak, "Pope Benedict Disputes Jesus' Date of Birth (Internet article: www.newsfeed.time.com/2012/11/22/pope-benedict-disputes-jesus-date-of-birth/), 3 pages; accessed 1/28/15.]

Of course, former Pope Benedict XVI is a bit late in joining the chorus of historians who have concluded that the present *traditional* date of *December 25, AD 1* for the birthdate of Jesus is *not* historically correct.

Messianic Rabbi Avi Ben Mordechai, related to the traditional Christian holiday of Christmas, puts it bluntly in his book, *Messiah, Volume 2: Understanding His Life and Teachings in Hebraic Context* (1997):

First-century believers in Mashiach [Messiah], most of whom were Jews, knew nothing about 'Christmas.' It is a pagan festival embellished by ancient anti-Semitic Gentiles and should be avoided by all those who truly love G-d and His Jewish Mashiach [Messiah].^{bbb} [Avi Ben Mordechai, *op. cit.*, p. 40.]

This Section A, "*When Was Jesus Born?*," presents the background for the *traditional* date as well as many other *proposed* dates by historians. In addition, the case is carefully presented for the *actual* date of Jesus' birth being on **Wednesday, September 11, 3 BC, after sunset** (on the Gregorian calendar; **Tishri 1** on the Hebrew calendar—on the **Feast of Trumpets!**). So, how is this date derived? The evidence for the case presented is laid out for your review.

In fact, the *actual* date can be stated unequivocally! How can we say this? This is derived from a careful analysis of **Scripture**, review of secular history records, and a review of the astronomy related to the period on each side of Jesus' birth as well as the astronomy on the very day! All this is presented as I lay out the "case" for this. Of course, many *other* dates have been proposed by historians, but, in my opinion, the strongest case is for *September 11, 3 BC*. I think you will find the laying out of the case interesting and edifying.

Why does it matter? A good question. We are to worship God “*in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:24). God puts great value on truth, and we should strive to obtain truth, especially biblical truth. This goes for the actual history of the birth and crucifixion of Jesus, especially when it can be based on biblical truth—and it can— as well as being based on other reliable contemporary historical accounts.

Another reason that the actual birthdate of Jesus is important is that it helps to further confirm the validity of Scripture in that various Scripture passages are shown to tie together to present historical truth.

In addition, the actual birthday of Jesus links the *First Coming* and the *Second Coming* of Jesus (at the Rapture of the Church), as both occur on the same date on the Jewish calendar—*Tishri 1: the Day of Trumpets!* This is astonishing and highly significant—the day of Jesus’ birth is on the same day on the Hebrew calendar as His return at His Second-Coming-Rapture event [see Chapter 4 of this Section A: “Was Jesus Born on the Feast of Trumpets (*Tishri 1*)?” and Chapter 6 of *The Last Shofar!* (in section “The Fall Feasts;” subsection “The Feast of Trumpets”).]. Once again, the Feasts of the Lord come into play for important events in the Bible involving God’s plan of redemption, which is a theme of the first book by Lenard and Zoller, *The Last Shofar!*

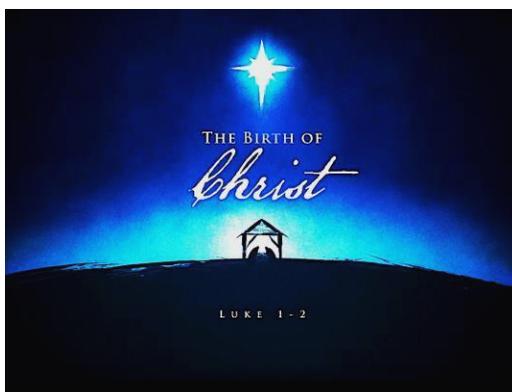
Much of the material in this Section A of Part I is presented in the insightful book by Dr. Ernest L. Martin, *The Star That Astonished the World—The Star of Bethlehem* (1996).² [Ernest L. Martin, *The Star That Astonished the World—The Star of Bethlehem, Second Edition* (ASK Publications, Portland, OR, 1996), 280 pages.] This book by Martin gives much of the historical, biblical, and astronomical evidence that makes the identification of the star of Bethlehem as well as the birthdate of Jesus possible. Because of the historical and astronomical research in Martin’s book, most of the planetariums around the world are now showing what was astronomically happening at the crucial time in history when Jesus of Nazareth was born.

In addition to the material from Martin’s book, much *other* material is brought into this Section A of Part I, all duly cited and organized in this presentation. Hence, this presentation is the compilation of insights from many references, uniquely condensed together and organized to help readability.

As you will see, the case for **September 11, 3 BC** is based on evidence from the following areas: 1) Scriptural clues; 2) Historical records related to Rome and King Herod; and 3) Astronomy [including the astronomical signs observed by the Magi, a specific lunar eclipse which occurred before Herod's death, and the astronomical signs shown in Revelation 12]; and 4) Knowledge of the Jewish calendar---including the Feasts of the Lord, Sabbatical Years, and Jubilee Years.

Specifically, the case is laid out as *puzzle pieces* in Chapters 1 – 10 in this Part I, Section A, "*When Was Jesus Born?*"

When Was Jesus Born?



Chapter 1

Traditional Date vs. Actual Date of Jesus' Birth

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A. Traditional Date: December 25, 1 A.D.

1. How Did the *Traditional Date* Come About?

So, how did the *traditional* date of *December 25* come to be incorrectly associated with Jesus' birthday? It is widely recognized that *Christmas*—with its date and many of its popular customs and celebrations—is nowhere found in Scripture and, frankly, the customs come from pagan origins.

In summary, the celebration of December 25 has roots in ancient Persia, as *Mithra*, the Persian god of light, was said to be born out of a rock on December 25. The Roman emperor Aurelian in the third century (AD 274) established the festival of *Dies Invicti Solis*, the Day of the Invincible Sun, on December 25. *Mithraism* became Rome's official religion with the patronage of Aurelian, and Emperor Constantine adhered to *Mithraism* up to the time of his purported conversion to Christianity in the fourth century AD.³ [(29) Gerard and Patricia Del Re, *The Christmas Almanac* (1979), p. 17—as

referenced in (29) *Holidays or Holy Days—Does It Matter Which Days We Observe?* (United Church of God, USA, 2008), p. 8.]

In addition, there are Greek roots for celebrating a festival at the end of December, in honor of *Dionysus* (also called *Bacchus*), the god of wine. The Latin name for his celebration was *Bacchanalia*. The Romans also celebrated another holiday, the *Saturnalia*, held in the honor of Saturn, the god of time. Both celebrations were observed around the winter solstice—the day of the year with the shortest daylight (December 21). When the Julian calendar was instigated in the first century (46 AD), the winter solstice was declared by law as December 25, to be an official Roman celebration.⁴ [*Ibid.*, pp. 5,7,8.]

It is difficult to determine the first time anyone celebrated December 25 as *Christmas*, commemorating the birth of Jesus, but it is generally agreed by historians that it was sometime during the fourth century, about 300 years after Jesus' death.

So why would the Roman church choose to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25? It has been proposed that religious leaders wanted to give a pagan festival a name-change to make it easier to attract pagans to convert to Christianity.⁵ [Darris McNeely, "When Was Jesus Born?" in the magazine *The Good News*, www.GNmagazine.org (United Church of God, Cincinnati, OH: Volume 19, Number 6, November-December 2014), p. 24.]

Eastern churches commemorate Jesus' birth, the visit of the Magi, and His baptism on January 6. However, most Christians worldwide today have adopted December 25.

It should be noted that not one of the biblical writers says anything about commemorating Christ's birth, nor did Jesus. Jesus did, however, give explicit instructions as to how His followers were to commemorate His *death* (1 Cor. 11:23-26), but nothing about formally commemorating His birth. Jesus' birth is, however, richly covered—especially in the Gospel of Matthew—and was announced by the angels, celebrated by the shepherds and by Simeon and Anna in the Temple, and, later, by the Magi.

2. History of the Celebration of Christmas (December 25)

It is good to understand the history of the church related to celebrating the birth of Jesus and the Christmas traditions. For the first three centuries

of Christianity, “Christmas” was not part of the Christian calendar. Some church fathers, like Origen, were opposed to the celebration of the birth of Christ; he argued that “It would be wrong to honor Christ in the same way Pharaoh and Herod were honored. Birthdays were for pagan gods.”^{mm} [Dr. Medeiros, “Christmas a Worldwide Celebration of the Incarnation” (Reformed Theological Seminary publication, Jackson, MS, December 2016).]

The Reformed tradition has mixed positions concerning Christmas. It is widely acknowledged that the Reformers, and particularly the Puritans, were against the festivities related to the birth of Christ. They raised both historical and theological questions, largely centered around the point that for the first 300 years Christians did not celebrate the birth of Christ and that Christmas was associated with the Roman Catholic tradition. However, not all Reformers were against the celebration. John Calvin actually wrote a letter in 1551 to a Swiss pastor regarding his “moderate course of keeping Christ’s birth-day as you are wont to do.”^{pp} [Dr. Medeiros, “Christmas A Worldwide Celebration of the Incarnation” (Reformed Theological Seminary publication, Jackson, MS, December 2016), p. 3.]

The English Puritans in 1644 banned this “pagan” and “Roman Catholic” celebration in England as a step “to purify religious belief and remove everything that was not directly commanded or described in the Bible.” King Charles in 1649 repealed the ban after he took office. In America, after the 1830s, when Puritanism was largely “thrown off,” Americans began to celebrate Christmas with a mix of Dutch and English traditions.

3. Should We Celebrate Christmas?

No, we’re not trying to take away anyone’s Christmas or Easter, but it should be understood that “December 25” was not the date of birth of Jesus and “Good Friday” was not the actual day that Jesus was crucified. Celebrating these events, even though the traditional dates and places are wrong, still has value. However, in this book, we are presenting other cases for the actual dates and places, which we believe to be more accurate from a scriptural and historical standpoint. As we have emphasized previously, every reader can evaluate the evidence for our cases and come to his or her own conclusions.

It is certainly proper to celebrate the incarnate birth of Jesus, the Son of the living God. Such celebration is found throughout Scripture. The biblical

writers infallibly reported about the incarnate birth of the Lord Jesus, testifying:

“. . . to this historical, timely, spatial, purposeful event, and to remind us every day (not just once a year) that *‘for unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.’* (Isaiah 9:6, NKJ)”^{qa} [Dr. Medeiros, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–4.]

We can celebrate the incarnation of God’s Only Son, the Lord Jesus, with great joy. And we can celebrate and remember His birth (incarnation) and presence with us every day, not just once a year. Related to this celebration of the incarnation, Dr. Medeiros states the following:

“It is biblical. It is proper. It is reasonable. Christ came. Christ was born. Christ died. Christ was buried. Christ rose from the dead. Christ ascended into the heavens. Christ is here with us And He will come back. Are we ready to celebrate His second appearance as well?”^{rr} [Dr. Medeiros, *op. cit.*, p. 4.]

B. No Year “0”

You would think that with the year numbering system of BC (“Before Christ”) and AD (*Anno Domini*—“The Year of Our Lord”) Jesus would have a birthdate of *Year Zero*, with years numbered from his birth. However, this is not the case as there is no *Year Zero* in either the Julian and Gregorian Calendars.

The sequence of years before Christ ends at 1 BC and the AD series picks up the very next year with AD 1. This seems surprising to us as we are used to having a timeline with a zero separating the negative and positive numbers. However, this wasn’t the case back when the Christian calendar was developed by *Dionysius Exiguus* (“Dennis the Short”), a 6th-century monk.

Dionysius renumbered the years starting with the incarnation (birth) of Jesus, beginning with the year 1 as the Roman numbering system had no way at that time to indicate a zero. Therefore, in counting the number of years spanning from BC to AD, zero is not counted; for example, from 3 BC to AD 3 is *five years* rather than six years. Hence, 1 BC to AD 1 is counted as one year; and 1 BC can be considered 1 CE (Common Era) in counting years.

C. Commonly Accepted but Incorrect “Actual” Dates

Most modern theologians insist on a year before 4 BC and as early as 5, 6, or 7 BC—even as early as 12 BC—for the birth of Jesus. This is **despite** the early Christian writers who say that Jesus was born *after 4 BC*.⁶ [J. Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology, First Edition* (Princeton U. Press, 1964), p. 229; presented in Ernest L. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 105.]

Why the confusion? The confusion is largely due to the scarcity of good historical records during the period which has been called the *Dark Decade* of history, from 6 BC to AD 4.⁷ [Ernest L. Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-104.] This is further covered in Chapter 7, “Roman History.”

In addition, there is confusion over a particular *lunar eclipse*. Josephus mentions that an eclipse of the moon occurred not long after the death of Herod the Great. Indeed, there was a lunar eclipse on March 13, 4 BC, and this is the eclipse that most scholars, incorrectly, select as the one associated with the death of Herod.

There were, however, *other* eclipses near the same time, and a range of factors and information needs to be evaluated correctly to determine which lunar eclipse to select as being relevant to the death of Herod the Great. There is good evidence that the memorable lunar eclipse of *January 10, 1 BC* is the one to which Josephus was referring. This lunar eclipse and the related death of Herod occurring shortly before this eclipse (also in 1 BC), is a better fit with other historical events and records. This is further discussed in Chapter 8, “Death of King Herod in Life of Jesus.”

D. The Actual Date: September 11, 3 BC

Who would guess that a specific date for the birth of Jesus could, indeed, be accurately determined among all the confusion? Actually, not just the month, day, and year, but also the exact time (within an hour or so)? This

paper will lay out the case for just that—*Wednesday, September 11, 3 BC, between 6:18 p.m. (sunset) and 7:39 p.m. (moonset)*. It is really quite interesting, and you can evaluate the validity for the case presented—see particularly Chapter 3, “Evidence from Astronomical/Zodiac References in Scripture” (B. 3. “Interpretation of Signs in Revelation 12:1-6”).

1. Date Understood by Early Christians

Related to the year of Jesus’ birth, it is insightful to determine when the early church leaders, taught by the Apostles and the disciples of the Apostles, stated that Jesus was born. After all, they had many historical sources not known to us, as many of the ancient libraries were destroyed.

It should be duly noted that not a single one of the Christian scholars, who were able to do research at the ancient libraries at Alexandria, Pergamum, Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast of Israel, as well as the official records at Rome, stated that Jesus was born in the timeframe of 7 BC to 5 BC.⁸ [Ernest L. Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 35.] Most of the early writers focused on a 3 BC to 2 BC birthdate. Hence, every one of them is in disagreement with modern historical opinion on this subject, which holds to an earlier date of birth. Who were some of these early scholars? Irenaeus of Lyon, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Julius Africanus, and Hippolytus of Rome all wrote in the late 100s or early 200s—and all of these, and others, supported a birthdate of 3 BC or 2 BC.⁹ [Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology, First Edition* (Princeton U. Press, 1964), p. 291; presented in Jimmy Akin, “What Year Was Jesus Born? The Answer May Surprise You” (www.ncregister.com/blog/jimmy-akin/what-year-was-jesus-born-the-answer-may-surprise-you#ixzz3Q8q2kBTE), p. 3; accessed 1/28/15.]

2. Evidence for *September 11, 3 BC* Is Given Here in Part I

The evidence given for *September 11, 3 BC* being the birthdate of Jesus is laid out in this Part I. This includes evidence from multiple sources—the Bible; historical records relating to Herod; and astronomy, including astronomical signs at the time the Magi were in Persia as well as in Jerusalem, both before and at the time of the birth of Jesus. This is all presented with references cited. The number of ways to determine the birthdate of Jesus are surprising, and they all point to the same date, as will

be shown in the following chapters of this Section A, “*When Was Jesus Born?*”