

## Sejanus' Death Narrows the Date for our Lord's Death

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Since Jesus was crucified while Pilate was procurator of Judea (26 to 37 AD), our Lord had to have died between those years. Furthermore, the New Testament states that he died on a Passover which fell before a "high" Sabbath and not the weekly Sabbath.<sup>1</sup> The Greek of Matthew 28:1 renders the word "Sabbath" as plural (i.e., Sabbaths). Thus "In the end of the Sabbath(s)" indicates a condition in which there are two Sabbaths, one after another: and one is a "high Sabbath" (namely, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread = 15 Nisan) followed by the regular weekly Sabbath.

Luke 3:1–2 and Astronomical calculations taken along with the well-known 483-year prophecy in Daniel 9:25 demand that this occurred between AD 30 and 33. The fact that Sejanus' (who held a reign of terror over Rome from AD 26-31) downfall came in AD 31 has a very significant impact on dating the death of Christ Jesus.

Thus if, for example, we take 473 BC as the year in which Xerxes installed Artaxerxes I Longimanus as his pro-regent,<sup>2</sup> the Jews would quite naturally begin to reference the dates associated with him from that year as it would have been the point from which they began to have dealings with him as their sovereign.

Numbering from that date would place his 20<sup>th</sup> year over the Jews as 454 BC (exactly as Ussher<sup>3</sup> – and not the traditional 445, or even

444 or 446) and the 483 years of the Daniel 9:25 prophecy brings us to AD 30 for its fulfillment (454 BC + AD 30 = 484 less one for going from BC to AD = 483). This date agrees with that already determined in the work by Jones (fn. 2).

Going to the other extreme and taking 470 BC as the commencement year of Artaxerxes' pro-regency would result in 451 BC as being his twentieth and AD 33 would be the 483<sup>rd</sup> year from that point. However, the well-known account that Tiberius received word from Pilate about the miracles done by Jesus, the events associated with His death and resurrection as well as the miracles done in His name afterward by His disciples disallows AD 33. Why?

Because upon reading the report from Pilate and hearing that many believed Christ to be a god, Tiberius proposed to the senate of Rome that Jesus be included among their gods. It was rejected<sup>4</sup> – due mainly to the obstinate opposition of Sejanus, the anti-Semitic prefect of Tiberius.<sup>5</sup> Now Tacitus and others fix Sejanus' death at 18 Oct., AD 31.<sup>6</sup> This being two years *before* 33, the crucifixion could not possibly have taken place in 32 or 33! How could Sejanus die in AD 31 and yet address the Roman Senate *after* a 32 or 33 crucifixion? He could not, but he could if Christ died in AD 30!

Writing in AD 417, Orosius correctly adds that Augustus died in AUC 767 (AD 14) and that Christ died in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius' sole reign,<sup>7</sup> which was AD 30! (AUC 783)<sup>8</sup>

The following chart is the Daniel 9:25 "483-year" prophecy depicting Artaxerxes Longimanus associated on the throne as pro-*rex* with Xerxes I around 473 BC (fn. 2: also see Chart 5c of Jones' 2009 *Chronology* and his display on page xiv).

<sup>1</sup> Mk 14:12 makes it clear that Passover began the night of the Last Supper. John 19:31 also makes it clear that the evening following Jesus' death was not the regular weekly Sabbath (Saturday) but the beginning day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Nisan 15. Therefore, Jesus died on Thursday 14 Nisan.

<sup>2</sup> An article in a most prestigious journal has reported an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription stating that Artaxerxes Longimanus was associated with his father on the throne in the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Xerxes' reign: Bouchier Wrey Savile, "Revelation and Science", *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record*, Series 4, (London, 1863) p. 156. See: Floyd Nolen Jones, *A Chronology of the Old Testament*, (Master Books Pub., 2009), pp. 226–228, 234–240.

<sup>3</sup> Ussher, *Annals of the World*, rev. by Larry and Marion Pierce, (Master Books, 2003), p. 152 (1658 ed., p. 137). Based on Thucydides & Charon of Lampsacus, Dionysius Petavius (a French Jesuit historian and theologian) also dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of Artaxerxes as 454 BC (rather than

444, 445, or 446 BC) in his *Opus de Doctrina Temporum* (2 Vols., 1627): see Martin Anstey, *The Romance of Bible Chronology*, (London: Marshall Brothers., 1913), p. 280).

<sup>4</sup> Tertullian, *Apology*, 5 & 21 (written c.207 AD).

<sup>5</sup> Orosius, Paulus, *Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, (NY: Columbia UP, 1936) pp. 325-26. Augustine's protégé, Orosius wrote this history at his mentors request and under his watchful eye. (Neither 4 nor 5 in the above text refer to the well-known Catholic forgeries.)

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, vi, 25 & 15 (written c.117 AD).

<sup>7</sup> Orosius, *Seven Books of History*, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–326.

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *Chronology of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

