

# The Approaching End of the Age – Part IV. Section III. Chapter V. Soli-Lunar Measures of Our Lord's Earthly Lifetime, and of Human History as a Whole.



Continued from [Part IV. Section III. Soli-Lunar Cycles, And Their Relation to the Chronology of History. Chapter IV. Part 2.](#)

WE have shown in the foregoing chapters, that the leading prophetic times are accurate astronomic cycles,—cycles not remote from terrestrial affairs, but connected with our ordinary calendar measurements of time—cycles harmonizing, more or less perfectly, the unequal yet intimately related solar and lunar revolutions.

We have also shown that the epacts of these prophetic times form, with one peculiar exception, a remarkable series of septiform periods or weeks, of years, months, weeks, and days; and that, in the one instance where it is not septiform, the epact assumes a strikingly *sixfold* character, in harmony with the sixfold number, attached by Divine inspiration to the power of which that period is the duration.

These prophetic times become in due course *historic* times; and the question naturally arises, Will this principle of epact measurement yield analogous results, when extended to other historic times, and to the whole chronology of human history?

In what follows we must endeavour to show that it does, and that a marvellous law of harmonious proportion is clearly observable between the chronology of certain *types* of the course of redemption history and that of the actual events typified—the reality being to the chronological type, not as a year to a day, but as a *solι-lunar* cycle to a day. And what is still more remarkable is that this cycle—a cycle whose epact is exactly one solar year, *measures the most important period in all human history—the earthly lifetime of our Lord Jesus Christ*.\*

\* In every solar year there is an excess of ten days and twenty-one hours, or nearly eleven days, over the lunar year, *i.e.*, over the year as measured by twelve revolutions of the moon, so that when the sun commences his second round, the moon is between ten and eleven days behind hand. In three solar years, the moon has fallen back rather more than a month, in nineteen years it has retrograded seven months, and in 33 years, 7 months and 7 days, it has fallen back *one*

*solar year*. This period is therefore A SOLI-LUNAR CYCLE of a certain order, and seven such periods, or 235 solar years, is a cycle of the same kind, and at the same time a number of complete solar years.

We ask special attention to this statement. The evidence which justifies it amounts—not to demonstration, for the nature of the case forbids this—but to so high a degree of probability, as to be almost moral certainty, and the fact, if it be such, is a deeply interesting and important one, indicating another underlying link of connection between the assertions of Scripture history, and the phenomena of astronomic science.

A brief consideration of the statements of the New Testament on the period in question is needful here.

We learn from St. Luke that at the time of His baptism, when the Holy Ghost, in bodily shape like a dove, descended on Him to anoint Him for his ministry, and when the voice from heaven proclaimed Him the beloved Son of God, "Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age."

His entrance on his career of public service to God at this age, was in accordance with the principles of the Levitical Law, and with the practice of the Levites. Thirty years of age is the time of mental, moral and physical maturity—a man's prime. "From *thirty years old* and upward, until fifty years old, shalt thou number them," was the law respecting the Levites, "all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." This is seven times reiterated in the fourth of Numbers (verses 3, 23, 30, 35; 39 43,47).

David a type of the Messiah, began to reign at this same age. "David was *thirty years old* when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years." So the Son of David was thirty years old when He began his public life.

The Gospels nowhere expressly state the exact duration of our Lord's *ministry*, yet that it lasted three years and a half years, is clearly deducible from what they do state. The Gospel of John distinctly mentions three "feasts" of Passover in the course of our Lord's ministry, and implies a fourth. The first, at which He cleansed the temple (chap. ii.); the second, when He healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (chap. v.); the third, about the time of his feeding the multitude (chap. vi. 3); and the fourth, which He ate with his disciples before He suffered, the same night in which He was betrayed (chap. xviii, 28), Four Passovers of course include *three years*. There was also evidently an interval of some months between our Lord's baptism by John in Bethabara beyond Jordan, and the first of these Passovers. The events which had intervened were his forty days' fast, and subsequent temptation in the desert of Judea; his return journey to Galilee; his visit to Cana at the time of the marriage, when He turned the water into wine; his subsequent brief visit to Capernaum; and his return to Judea. All this can scarcely have occupied less than six months; so that it is with good ground that, from the early Fathers onwards, our Lord's ministry is assumed to have lasted three years and a half.\*

\* "On the *phrase feat of the Jews* (three Greek words), John v. 1, turns mainly the question as to the duration of our Lord's public ministry. *John notes distinctly three Passovers*; John ii.

13; vi. 4; xii. 1. If now this feast be another Passover, then our Lord's public labours continued during three and a half years; if not, then the time of his ministry must in all probability be reckoned one year less.

The only reasonable ground of doubt in this case, is the absence of the definite article before *feast*. But even as the text now stands, it *may* assuredly in itself just as well denote the great Jewish festival as any other. The following considerations seem to show that it does most probably thus stand for a Passover, viz. the *second* in our Lord's public ministry.

1. The word *feast* (Greek word), without the article, is put definitely for the Passover, in the phrase (two Greek words), Matt. xxvii. 15; Mark xv. 6; Luke xxiii. 17. Comp. John xviii. 39.

2. In Hebrew a noun before a genitive is made definite by prefixing the article, not to the noun itself but to the genitive; see Davies's translation of Gesenius's Heb. Gr. § 109; 1 Nordheim Heb. Gr. ii. p. 14, y. This idiom is transferred by the LXX. into Greek; e.g. Deut. xvi. 13, (Greek words), Heb. (Hebrew word) *i.e.* the festival of tabernacles. So too in the New Testament; Matt. xii. 24, (Greek words), *i.e.*, the prince of demons. Hence, in the passage before us, according to the analogous English idiom, we may render the phrase by *the Jews festival*; which marks it definitely as the Passover.

3. It is not probable, that John means here to imply that the festival was indefinite or uncertain. Such is not his usual manner. The Jewish festivals were to him the measures of time; and in every other instance they are definitely specified. So the Passover, John ii. 23; xii. 1; even when Jesus does not visit it, vi. 4 and also when it is expressed only by *the feast*, iv. 45, xi. 56; xii. 12, 20, al. So too the festival of Tabernacles, vii. 2; and of the Dedication, x. 22. This is all natural in him; for an indefinite festival could afford no note of time.

4. The plucking of the ears of grain by the disciples shows that a Passover had just been kept; which tallies accurately with this visit of our Lord to Jerusalem.

5. This *feast* could not have been the festival either of Pentecost or of Tabernacles next following our Lord's first Passover, He returned from Judea to Galilee not until eight months after that Passover, when both these festivals were already past. That it might by possibility have been the Pentecost after a second Passover not mentioned, and before that in John vi. 4, cannot perhaps be fully disproved; but such a view has in itself no probability, and is apparently entertained by no one. At any rate, it would also give the same duration of three and a half years to our Lord's ministry.

6. Nor can we well understand here the festival of Purim, which occurred on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, or March, one month before the Passover; see Esth. ix. 21, 22, 26-28, "Against this the following considerations present themselves: (a) The Jews did not go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of Purim. The observance of it among that people throughout the world consisted solely in reading the Book of Esther in their synagogues on those days, and making them "days of feasting and joy and of sending portions (dishes) one to another and gifts to the poor;" Esth. ix. 22; Jos. Ant. xi. 6, 13, Reland, Antiq.; Heb. iv. 9. But the "multitude," John v. 13, seems to imply a concourse of strangers at one of the great festivals. (b) It is very improbable that Jesus would have gone up to Jerusalem at the Purim, to which the Jews did not go up, rather than at the Passover which occurred only a month later. His being once present at the festival of Dedication (John x. 22) is not a parallel case; since He appears not to have gone up for that purpose, but this festival occurred while He remained in or near Jerusalem after the festival of Tabernacles, John vii. 2, sq. (v) The infirm man was healed on the sabbath, John v. 9: which sabbath belonged to the festival, as the whole context shows, John v. 1, 2, 10-13. But the Purim was never celebrated on a sabbath; and, when it happened to fall on that day, was regularly deferred; see Reland I. c.

7. The main objection urged against taking this *feast* as a Passover, is the circumstance, that in such case, as our Lord did not go up to the Passover spoken of in John vi. 4, but only at the subsequent festival of Tabernacles in John vii. 2, sq., He would thus have absented Himself from Jerusalem for a year and six months; a neglect, it is alleged, inconsistent with His character and with a due observance of the Jewish law. But a sufficient reason is assigned for this omission, namely, "because the Jews sought to kill Him" (John vii. 1; comp. v. 18). It obviously had been our Lord's custom to visit the holy city every year at the Passover; and because, for the reason assigned, He once let this occasion pass by, He therefore went up six months afterwards, at the feast of Tabernacles. All this presents a view perfectly natural and covers the whole ground. Nor have we any right to assume, as many do, that our Lord regularly went up

to Jerusalem on other occasions besides those specified in the New Testament.

In this instance, the most ancient view is that which takes *feast* for a Passover. So Irenaeus in the third century: "Et posthac iterum secunda vice adscendit [Jesus] in diem paschae in Hierusalem, quando paralyticum, qui juxta natatorium jacebat xxxviii annos curavit;" Adv. Hqer. ii. 39. The same view was adopted by Eusebius, Theodoret, and others; and in later times has been followed by Luther, Scaliger, Grotius, Lightfoot, Le Clerc, Lampe, Hengstenberg, Greswell, etc. Cyril and Chrysostom held to a Pentecost, as also the Harmony ascribed to Tatian; and so, in modern times, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Bengel, etc. The festival of Purim was first suggested by Kepler ("Eclogae Chronice," pp. 72, 129, sq. Francof. 1615); and at the present day this is the only view, aside from the Passover, that finds advocates. Those who hold it, as Hug, Neander, Olshausen, Tholuck, Meyer, Wieseler (Lucke and De Wette leave the question undecided), regard John vi. 4 as having reference to the second Passover during our Lord's ministry; which thus becomes limited to two and a half years. See generally, Greswell's Dissert. viii. vol. ii. Neander's *Leben Jesu*, 3Te Ausg. p. 434. Wieseler's *Chronol. Synopse der Vier Euangelien*, pp. 211-222.

From "Harmony of the Gospels," following that in Greek, by Ed. Robinson, D.D., LL.D., published by the Religious Tract Society (pp. 199-200). "*That this feast was a passover, was certainly the most ancient opinion, and it is the opinion of the great majority of critics, being that of Irenaeus, as early as the second century, Eusebius and Theodoret among the fathers; and of Luther, Beza, Maldonat, Grotius, Lightfoot, La Clerk, Lampe, Hengstenberg, Greswell, Robinson, Tholuck in his 6th edition, and apparently in his 7th and last, Middleton, Trench, Webster and Wilkimson,*" etc. Commentary on N. Test., Rev. D, Brown, on John v. 1.

We assume then, that at the time of his death, our blessed Lord was thirty-three and a half years of age. Now, the soli-lunar cycle of which we speak is thirty-three years, seven months and seven days, so at first sight it seems more than a month longer than the life of Christ, but it must be remembered that our Lord's connection with this earth did not terminate with his death and resurrection. He walked and talked with his disciples, He ate and drank before them; and manifested Himself to them during forty days after his resurrection before He left the world altogether, and "a cloud received Him out of their sight" These forty days must therefore be included in any estimate of His earthly life, for not until the final parting on the mount of Olives did cease to be true that God in human form was tabernacling among men.

Our Lord's life, then, was composed of the 30 years prior to his baptism, the three years and a half of his ministry, and 40 days after his resurrection, and as it terminated between the feasts of Passover and Pentecost, it must have commenced about the time of the feast of Tabernacles. Now from the day of ascension in A.D. 29, to the first day of the feast of Tabernacles in the 34th preceding year, the interval (as we show in the Appendix) was 33 solar years 7 lunar months and 7 days, which is the exact measure of the soli-lunar cycle in question.

If it be objected that while the first and last periods of our Lord's life were clearly 30 years and 40 days, yet that the central period of his ministry cannot be proved to have been just three years and a half, we reply that it cannot be proved to have been more or less than that period, and there are the following good grounds for believing that the general view as to its duration is correct.

(I) The Divine system of times and seasons is, as we have seen, one of *weeks*. Messiah's coming and death had been announced in the prophecy of "70 weeks,"

and that prophecy speaks of a division in the midst of a week. A week of years and a half week of years, are periods recognised and often employed in Scripture, and the latter is notably used in connection with the testimony of God's faithful witnesses. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of *three years and six months*" (James v. 17). Similarly the two sackcloth-clothed witnesses in Rev. xi. pro- (Note: From this point there seems to be missing text in the PDF file of the end of this paragraph. Based on the prophecy of the two witnesses in Revelation chapter 9, I am assuming the author meant to say the following: prophesied a thousand two hundred and threescore days, which is three and one half years.)

We have then two leading facts; first, that the *type* of redemption embodied in the Jewish ritual extended over seven months of the ordinary year; and secondly, that as far as can be ascertained from Scripture the actual *history* or course of redemption extends over seven millenaries. Now the remarkable result of the application of the soli-lunar cycle of 33 years 7 months and 7 days to these periods is, that it brings the week of millenaries into close and special harmony with the week of months. A thousand years contains as many of these soli-lunar cycles as there are days in a month, and consequently *seven millenaries are seven months of such cycles*. The agreement between the chronological type and the great antitype is not, therefore, merely that between a week of months and a week of millenaries, it is far more close and remarkable. THE TYPE BEARS TO THE ANTITYPE THE PERFECT PROPORTION OF A WEEK OF MONTHS ON ONE SCALE TO A WEEK OF MONTHS ON ANOTHER. Either may be regarded as a week of months contained in a year; the former a year of 360 to 365 days, the latter a year of 360 to 365 soli-lunar cycles.

In the adjoined plate the millenaries measuring the course of human history are divided into Messianic cycles, and may be compared with the months and days of the Levitical calendar sketched in the centre.

A thousand years equal  $29\frac{3}{4}$  Messianic cycles (analogous with the  $29\frac{3}{4}$ d. lunar month); *thirty* Messianic cycles (analogous with the 30d. calendar month of the Prophetic Times) equal exactly 1007 solar years and 7 lunations; and 180 Messianic cycles (half 360) equal 6045 solar years, 5 months,

According to the Hebrew chronology, as shown by Mr. Clinton, we have now about reached the termination of the first six thousand years of human history; and history as well as prophecy abundantly confirm the view this fact suggests, that we are now living in the last or closing days of the third great dispensation, and on the verge of another and a better age. *Half a vast year of Messianic cycles, measured from the creation of man, is now expiring*; and as it expires, there dawns upon the world the light which immediately precedes the sun-rising; there arise around us the solemn yet joyful evidences of the nearness of the glorious kingdom of our God.\*

\* For further particulars with reference to the Messianic cycle see Appendix.

Continued in [Part IV. Section III. Chapter VI. Concluding Remarks. Part 1.](#)