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A Time Line Countdown Leading Up to Jesus' Birth - Part A

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A TIME LINE COUNTDOWN LEADING TO THE INCARNATION & BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST – PART A

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4, 5).

The following is my attempt to list in chronological order those dates and occasions which were involved, leading to *“the fullness of the time,”* that is, the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem.

It can be readily seen that over 4,000 years of preparation is involved. To contrast this, it will be remembered God the Father performed His first great work, that of creation, in just six days, but took no less than forty centuries to accomplish His second and greatest work, that of redemption!

Here we have employed the famous and time-honored four *“w’s”* to overview each date and occasion. Thus, *when* did the prophecy occur, *where* did it occur, *what* was revealed, and *who* was involved.

1

When: 4000 B.C. (or earlier)

Where: the Garden of Eden

What: *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen. 3:15).*

Who: Adam and Eve

Comment: Genesis 3:15 is known as the *proto-evangel* verse, i.e., the first gospel verse in the Bible. In essence it predicts a future Savior (the Seed of the woman, Jesus, defeating the seed of the serpent, Satan), thus bringing salvation to a lost world!

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4, 5).

“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen (Rom. 16:20).

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Rev. 12:7-9).

2

When: 2090 B.C.

Where: Ur of the Chaldeans

What: *“And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed”* (Gen. 12:3).

Who: Abraham

Comment: It will be noted that the very first verse in the New Testament opens as follows: *“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham”* (Matt. 1:1).

3

When: 1859 B.C.

Where: Egypt

What: *“The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”* (Gen. 49:10).

Who: Jacob

Comment: The New Scofield Bible observes: *“Several suggestions have been offered to explain the word ‘Shiloh.’ The oldest translations render it ‘whose it is,’ or ‘to whom it belongs,’ with reference to the Messiah’s reign and the prophecy of Ezekiel 21:27.”*

“Overthrown, overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It shall be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him” (Ezek. 21:27).

The following verses seem to validate this interpretation: *“To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace”* (Luke 1:79). *“For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation”* (Eph. 2:14).

4

When: 1410 B. C. (?)

Where: Moab

What: *“I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; a Star shall come out of Jacob; a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and batter the brow of Moab, and destroy all the sons of tumult”* (Num. 24:17).

Who: Balaam

Comment: Those words were spoken by a false prophet named Balaam who had been paid by the king of Moab to curse the nation Israel. Needless to say, it was unsuccessful.

5

When: 1407 B.C.

Where: On the east bank of Jordan

What: *“The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear”* (Deut. 18:15).

Who: Moses

Comment: Those words refer to the coming of Christ:

A. As testified by John the Baptist:

“Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, ‘I am not the Christ.’ And they asked him, ‘What then? Are you Elijah?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ ‘Are you the Prophet?’ And he answered, ‘No.’ Then they said to him, ‘Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?’ He said: ‘I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the LORD’” (John 1:19-23).

B. As testified by the 5,000 men who were fed by Jesus:

“Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world’” (John 6:14).

C. As testified by Peter:

“And that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you’” (Acts 3:20-22).

D. As testified by Stephen:

“This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, ‘The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear’” (Acts 7:37).

6

When: 1100 B.C.

Where: Bethlehem

What: *“Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David” (Ruth 4:22).*

Who: Boaz and Ruth

Comment: In the providential plan of God, a former pagan girl named Ruth meets and marries Boaz, a godly man from the tribe of Judah. Thus this couple would later become the great-grandparents of King David himself! But the story does not end here. David later fathered two sons through Bathsheba—Solomon and Nathan. Here is the great and grand conclusion:

Jesus received His *legal* right to rule over Israel (according to Matthew) through Joseph, His stepfather, and His *biological* authority (as seen in Luke’s account) through Mary! (Matt. 1:2-16; Lk. 3:23-38).

Amazing are the ways of the Almighty!

7

When: 1004 B.C.

Where: Jerusalem

What: *“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom”* (2 Sam. 7:12).

Who: David

Comment: *“When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever”* (2 Sam. 7:12-16).

These are the last recorded words God spoke to David. The context indicates He had two kings in mind:

- Solomon (verses 12, 14)
- Jesus (verse 16)

In fact, ten centuries later the angel Gabriel appeared to a young virgin girl named Mary and reaffirmed this promise: *“Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end’”* (Luke 1:30-33).

8

When: 690 B.C.

Where: Jerusalem

What: *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel”* (Isa. 7:14).

Who: Isaiah

Comment: Some eight centuries before Jesus was born, the city of Jerusalem was being threatened by Resin, King of Syria, and Pekah, King of Israel’s ten tribes. Isaiah the prophet, at God’s command, attempts to reassure Ahaz, Judah’s frightened king, that the city would be divinely delivered. The young ruler was invited to ask the Lord for any sign he might think of and it would be granted. But the young infidel refused. Responding to this, God then gave another sign to the whole house of Israel to show His intention to someday rescue Jerusalem from all her enemies forever! And here is the sign: Her baby would be known as Immanuel, meaning, *“God with us.”*

When: 685 B.C. (?)

Where: Jerusalem

What: *“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. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this”* (Isa. 9:6, 7).

Who: Isaiah

Comment: Here we are informed in regard to the dual nature of this Child:

- He would be fully human:
“For unto us a Child is born”
- He would also be fully divine:
“Unto us a Son is given. It should be noted that the Son was not born but given!
- Finally, this God-man King would someday rule over all of earth’s kingdoms.

When: 680 B.C.

Where: Jerusalem

What: *“Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed”* (Isa. 53:1).

Who: Isaiah

Comment: And what an incredible report it would be! Here in two key passages (Isa. 52, 53), the prophet describes in graphic fashion the physical features of the young boy Jesus in Nazareth, and the later disfigurement of the man Jesus on the cross.

- The boy (Isa. 53:2)
“He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.”
- The man (Isa. 52:14)
“His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.”