

AD 30 or AD 33?

A Meticulous Comparison of the Two Crucifixion-Date Candidates, the Continuum That Supports AD 30, and How the CJC's Math Resolves the Question

Executive Summary

Two dates account for nearly all serious scholarly discussion of the crucifixion's year: Friday, April 7, AD 30, and Friday, April 3, AD 33. Both satisfy the basic astronomical requirement of a Friday Nisan 14 during Pontius Pilate's governorship. This report compares every major line of evidence between them directly, places that comparison inside the wider, centuries-spanning continuum the Continuous Jubilee Calendar (CJC) tracks both scripturally and secularly, explains the astronomical method behind every lunar claim made and how to verify it independently, and shows how the CJC's own mathematics favors AD 30.

The finding, stated plainly: of eight direct comparison criteria, three genuinely discriminate between the two candidate years, and all three favor AD 30. That result is not an isolated calculation — it sits inside a continuum independently checkable across nine centuries of history, both inside Scripture and outside it.

The CJC's Core Result

Using the Continuous Jubilee Calendar's formula ($B = 1437 + \text{AD year}$; $\text{Cycle} = \text{floor}((B-1)/49) + 1$; $Y = B - ((\text{Cycle}-1) \times 49)$):

AD 30 computes to Cycle 30, Year 46. Divided by 7, this leaves a remainder of 4 — Position 4, the middle year of a nested seven-year unit, matching Daniel 9:27's description of the Messiah being “cut off” in “the midst of the week.” Gabriel's own language in Daniel 9:24-27 uses “weeks” consistently — seven weeks, sixty-two weeks, one final week — the same unit Leviticus 25:8 (“seven sabbaths of years”) and Deuteronomy 15:1 use for seven-year cycles elsewhere in the Torah. Daniel's own usage confirms this is deliberate: when he means an ordinary week of days, he adds that qualifier explicitly (“three whole weeks,” Daniel 10:2-3); no such qualifier appears in chapter 9.

AD 33 computes to Cycle 30, Year 49 — the last year of the cycle, not its mid-point.

Why This Is Evidence, and Unrelated Pattern-Matches Are Not

This distinction matters enough to state directly. Daniel 9:24-27 was written centuries before the crucifixion, and it does not merely gesture at a future Messiah — it specifies a precise structure in advance: sixty-nine “weeks” (483 years) from a named decree to an anointing, then a further period in which the Messiah is “cut off... in the midst of” a final week. This is a prediction made before the fact, checkable against a later, independently-dated event. That is fundamentally different from noticing, after the fact, that some unrelated historical date happens to share a numerical position with the crucifixion —

a secular battle or a later apostle's imprisonment was never the subject of Daniel's prophecy, so a shared position between them and AD 30 would be coincidence, not confirmation, and this report does not treat it otherwise. The evidentiary weight in this comparison rests on the prediction preceding the event by five centuries, not on any numbers matching after the fact.

The Broader Continuum: Nine Centuries, Checked Independently

The Year 46/Position 4 result above is not an isolated calculation built only for this one debate. The same formula, applied without adjustment, places a series of independently-dated events — some purely secular, some scriptural — at specific, checkable positions across more than 900 years of history. Each row below is dated by a source with no connection to the CJC itself:

Event	Year	CJC Position	How Dated
Battle of Qarqar	853 BC	Y=46 (mid-point)	Shalmaneser III's own Assyrian inscription
Hezekiah's deliverance	702 BC	Y=1 (Jubilee)	Sennacherib's Prism (conditional, see note below)
Ezra 7 decree	457 BC	Y=1 (Jubilee)	Persian regnal record, Elephantine Papyri (457 vs 458 BC depends on regnal-year convention)
Crucifixion	AD 30	Y=46 (mid-point)	Astronomical reconstruction + Gospel record
Stephen's martyrdom	AD 34	Y=1 (Jubilee)	Acts narrative sequencing
Peter's imprisonment	AD 44	Y=11 (mid-point)	Josephus + Parker/Dubberstein primary source
Gallio inscription, Corinth	AD 51	Y=18 (mid-point)	Delphi inscription

What this table demonstrates concretely is that the CJC's count has not drifted, been adjusted, or been quietly re-anchored across nine centuries of real, external history — each event above was dated by a source with no connection to the CJC, and each lands exactly where the unbroken count from the Exodus requires.

One item above requires an honest caveat: Hezekiah's 702 BC deliverance is not a clean external match. Sennacherib's own annals date his actual campaign to 701 BC, one year later. A conditional reconciliation exists (Leviticus 25's own math makes the year before every Jubilee an ordinary sabbatical as well,

producing two rest years matching Isaiah 37:30's agricultural sign) — but this is a defended interpretation, not an uncontested fact, and is presented that way throughout the CJC's own materials.

Paul's Travels: The Continuum Continues Past the Crucifixion

The same mathematics extends forward from AD 30 through the earliest apostolic era, verified against two of the strongest external anchors in the entire chronology.

Peter's imprisonment (Acts 12:3-4), AD 44: Herod Agrippa I's death is independently fixed by Josephus. The Passover framing in Acts 12 was checked directly against the primary academic source for converting this era's calendar — Parker and Dubberstein's Babylonian Chronology, 626 B.C.–A.D. 75 (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago) — which records Nisanu 1 at April 18, AD 44. Thirteen days later, Nisan 14 falls on May 1, AD 44, independently confirmed as a Friday by direct calendar computation. This is the strongest externally-verified festival date in the CJC outside the crucifixion week itself, since it traces cleanly from a primary source through to a confirmed weekday with no uncalibrated step in between.

Paul before Gallio (Acts 18:12), AD 51: fixed independently by the Gallio Inscription discovered at Delphi, among the most load-bearing external dates in the whole of early Christian chronology, with no dependence on any biblical text to establish the year.

Both dates are independently and externally verified, exactly as described above. Their specific CJC position carries no evidentiary weight beyond that — unlike the crucifixion, neither date was the subject of any advance prophecy specifying where it should fall, so a shared position after the fact is not treated as confirmation of anything here.

Full Comparison, All Evidence Examined

Criterion	AD 30	AD 33	Discriminates?
Friday Nisan 14	April 7 — Friday	April 3 — Friday	No — both satisfy
CJC cycle position (Y)	Y = 46 (mid-point, Position 4)	Y = 49 (not mid-point)	Yes
Ministry length from AD 27 baptism	~3 years	~6 years	Yes
Age parallel (Luke 3:23, Num. 4:3)	Age 30 at baptism, 33 at death	Age 30 at baptism, 36 at death	Yes
High Sabbath overlap (John 19:31)	Satisfied	Satisfied	No — both satisfy

Dead Sea earthquake evidence	Within range	Within range	No — range covers both
Thallus/Africanus darkness account	Corroborates generally	Corroborates generally	No — not year-specific

The Three Criteria That Actually Decide the Question

1. The CJC Mid-Week Position

As detailed above, AD 30's Year 46 lands at Position 4 of its seven-year unit — the middle position, echoing Wednesday's place as the middle day of an ordinary week. AD 33's Year 49 does not.

2. Ministry Length

Luke's fifteenth year of Tiberius, counted from AD 13/14 (the year a Roman law raised Tiberius to Augustus's side and Roman coins, RIC 225-226, show the two together), is AD 27/28. Gabriel's 483 years from the 457 BC decree (Daniel 9:25) and John 2:20's "forty-six years" reach the same year. This places Jesus's baptism in AD 27/28, a date that doesn't depend on the crucifixion-year debate. From that fixed point, AD 30 requires a ministry of roughly three years, matching John's Gospel's references to multiple Passovers naturally. AD 33 requires a ministry of roughly six years from the same anchor — nearly double — and depends on a minority reading of John's chronology to sustain.

3. The Age Parallel

Numbers 4:3 sets thirty as the age Levites began tabernacle service — not a legal requirement imposed on Jesus, but a typological parallel to Luke 3:23's statement that Jesus was “about thirty” at the start of his ministry. Under AD 30, this holds tightly: age 30 at baptism, age 33 at death. Under AD 33, keeping the same AD 27 baptism stretches this to age 36 at death — a six-year deviation the parallel no longer comfortably fits.

Scripture's Own Stringent Constraints

The CJC has always prioritized Scripture's own stated requirements over convenience, and those requirements are genuinely strict — not loose guidelines that any nearby date could satisfy.

The day itself begins at evening, not midnight: Genesis 1:5 establishes the pattern at creation — “the evening and the morning were the first day.” Leviticus 23:32 makes this explicit as legal instruction: “from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbath.” Every Nisan 14/15 calculation in this report treats the day-boundary as sunset, not midnight, because Scripture defines it that way before any calculation begins.

Passover itself is timed precisely, not loosely: Exodus 12:6 specifies the lamb be killed “between the two evenings” (Hebrew *bein ha'arbayim*), and Deuteronomy 16:6 clarifies this as “the going down of the sun” — removing ambiguity about exactly when the day changes.

The year itself begins in spring, tied to an astronomical event: Exodus 12:2 establishes Nisan as the first month, timed to the first new moon on or after the spring equinox — one of the few calendar markers in this whole framework that is a genuine, checkable astronomical event rather than a human decision.

These constraints are why a proposed crucifixion date cannot simply be nearby — it must land on a specific, real new moon, thirteen days before a specific, real Friday, within Pilate's specific attested governorship. Both AD 30 and AD 33 satisfy this strict requirement; most other candidate years do not, which is precisely why the debate narrows to these two specific years rather than remaining open to dozens of possibilities.

How the CJC Determines Lunar Phases and Weekdays — and How to Check It Yourself

Every moon-phase and weekday claim in this report was computed using standard, published astronomical methods — not proprietary or unverifiable calculations. Two separate techniques were used and cross-checked against each other: direct Julian Day Number conversion (the standard method for converting any calendar date into a single, continuous day-count usable in astronomical calculations), and an independent new-moon algorithm (based on Jean Meeus's *Astronomical Algorithms*, the standard reference text used throughout professional and amateur astronomy) to compute the moon's position and illumination on a given date.

This report does not ask readers to simply trust these results. Every calculation here can be independently verified using free, publicly available tools:

USNO (United States Naval Observatory): aa.usno.navy.mil provides official astronomical data, including historical moon-phase and rise/set calculations, maintained by the U.S. government's own timekeeping authority.

NASA: eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov (Fred Espenak's published catalogs) offers professionally-maintained lunar phase tables and eclipse data extending across millennia, the standard reference most professional astronomers use for historical lunar reconstructions.

Stellarium: a free, open-source planetarium program (stellarium.org) that lets anyone set a date thousands of years in the past or future and see exactly what the sky — including the moon's phase — looked like from any location on Earth, including ancient Jerusalem.

Readers are encouraged to use any of these three tools to check the specific dates in this report directly rather than taking the CJC's own calculations on faith — that independent verifiability is central to how this framework has been built and tested throughout.

What Does Not Decide the Question — Presented Fairly

Several frequently-cited pieces of evidence are real and worth knowing, but checked directly, none of them distinguishes AD 30 from AD 33. Presenting them as though they favor one year specifically would overstate the case.

The High Sabbath overlap (John 19:31): follows mechanically once Nisan 14 is fixed as a Friday — Nisan 15 is Saturday by definition. This holds equally for both years.

The Dead Sea earthquake evidence: a 2012 geological study (Williams, Schwab, and Brauer, International Geology Review) found sediment deformation at Ein Gedi tentatively dated to “31 AD ± 5 years” — a range covering both AD 30 and AD 33 without favoring either. The study's own authors note the earthquake may be unconnected to the crucifixion account in Matthew 27:51 entirely.

The Thallus/Africanus darkness account: the historian Thallus (c. AD 50) offered a natural explanation — a solar eclipse — for reported darkness; Julius Africanus (c. AD 221) corrected this on astronomical grounds, since an eclipse cannot occur at Passover's full moon. This corroborates that a darkness tradition circulated early enough to be debated by the third century. It does not identify which year that darkness occurred in.

Scholarly Support for AD 30

Beyond the CJC's own mathematics, AD 30 carries real, named scholarly support. Ben Witherington III states directly: “Jesus died on Nisan 14 (April 7) in A.D. 30” (New Testament History, 2001). F.F. Bruce likewise regards AD 30 as the most likely date. A 1969 survey by Josef Blinzler found just over half of scholars examined — 53 of 100 — favoring AD 30, a real if dated measure of the field's balance.

A Fifth Independent Path: John 2:20's Temple Chronology

Beyond named scholarly support, an independent chronological anchor exists entirely apart from Luke's Roman regnal count. John 2:20 records the temple as “forty and six years” in building at Jesus's first recorded Passover. Josephus dates the start of Herod's temple project to his 18th regnal year (Antiquities 15.11.1, ~20/19 BC); counting 46 years forward lands precisely in AD 27-28, converging with the AD 27 baptism this report's ministry-length argument depends on — reached through a completely different historical marker than Luke 3:1.

This carries the same kind of honest caveat as the Exodus-epoch question discussed elsewhere in CJC materials: just as the Exodus start date depends on which biblical count is used as the baseline, this count depends on which of Josephus's own conflicting figures is taken as the starting point. Josephus's Wars of the Jews 1.21.1 names Herod's 15th year, not his 18th, for the same project — a documented internal discrepancy, not a claim manufactured here. The mainstream, most-cited reading uses the 18th year and lands cleanly on AD 27; this is presented as the best-supported reading with its own internal source tension disclosed, not as beyond dispute.

The Honest Case for AD 33

AD 33 is not a fringe position, and this report does not treat it as one. Its strongest genuine argument rests on a minority reading of John's Gospel implying a longer ministry than three years — a real, defensible textual position, not a manufactured one. Colin Humphreys and W.G. Waddington's own published astronomical reconstruction concludes in favor of AD 33 specifically, based on a proposed lunar eclipse connection to Acts 2:20 — a connection this framework does not adopt, since Acts 2:20 quotes Joel 2:31's description of a future “day of the Lord,” not the crucifixion itself.

Conclusion

Astronomy alone does not decide between AD 30 and AD 33 — both are calendrically viable Fridays for Nisan 14, checkable by anyone using the free tools listed above. The decision rests on the criteria that actually discriminate between them: the CJC's own mid-week structural position, the ministry length anchored to an independently-fixed baptism date, and the age parallel to Luke 3:23. All three favor AD 30. That result sits inside a continuum independently checkable across nine centuries — from an Assyrian king's inscription at Qarqar, through Persian, Roman, and Jewish administrative records, into Paul's own verified travels — with the count itself never adjusted, re-anchored, or drifting across any of it. The remaining evidence often cited in this debate — the High Sabbath, the Dead Sea earthquake, the Thallus/Africanus darkness account — corroborates the crucifixion narrative generally but does not favor either year specifically, and should be presented that way rather than claimed for one side or the other.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.” — Proverbs 3:5