

New Testament Era Timeline

63 B.C.–A.D. 80

Explanation

Three main cultures intersected in the world into which Jesus was born: Jewish, Greek, and Roman. Each played differing roles in the religious, cultural, and political environment for the initial proclamation of the gospel and the establishment of the kingdom of God.

As these charts show, Jesus was born at a unique moment in history. The Jewish nation had reached the height of its power, flourishing under the political and economic skills of King Herod the Great, who had brought unprecedented unity and unsurpassed prosperity to the Jewish people. At the same time, Augustus Caesar had established an empire-wide era of peace, which allowed the spread of Roman government and law as well as the further extension of the Greek language and its cultural attractions. It was a time of great expectations and new possibilities, but also of challenges to old ways and disruptions in old social orders.

The design of these charts puts events in Judea on center stage, yielding many insights into New Testament history. For example, Julius Caesar, who completed his ascendancy to power over Rome around 45 B.C., granted special privileges to Jews, allowing them to establish synagogues throughout the Roman Empire. This allowed Judaism to enter areas that would become fertile grounds for Christian missionaries one hundred years later, and it created a political climate in which a new religion could be born and thrive.

References

- M. Cary and H. H. Scullard, *A History of Rome* (New York: St. Martin's, 1975).
Karl P. Donfried, "Chronology," *ABD*, 1:1002–22.

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DATE	ROME	JUDEA	GREECE AND THE EAST
63	Cicero becomes consul; Catilinarian conspiracy occurs.	Hyrchanus is appointed ethnarch of Judea, which comes under Roman control as dependency to Province of Syria.	Pompey annexes remains of Seleucid empire as province of Syria.
53	Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus rule Rome.		Crassus is defeated in Syria by the Parthians.
49	Roman civil war begins.		
48	Caesar consul for the second time.	Julius Caesar gives citizenship to Antipater and his son Herod.	Julius Caesar defeats Pompey at Pharsalus in Greece.
47	Caesar becomes military dictator.		
46	Caesar's legislation grants special rights and privileges to Jews in entire Roman Empire.		
44	Julius Caesar is assassinated.		
43	Marc Antony, Octavian Caesar, and Lepidus form second triumvirate.		
40		Parthians capture Jerusalem and appoint Antigonus ruler of Judea.	Parthia invades Syria.
37		Marc Antony appointed Herod king of Judea; he retakes Jerusalem, deposing Antigonus.	
31	Battle of Actium: Octavian Caesar defeats Antony and Cleopatra.	Herod's kingdom is greatly expanded by Octavian Caesar.	Octavian Caesar conquers Egypt.
27	Principate is established; Octavian Caesar is named Augustus.		
22–18	Herod's Temple is constructed.		
19	Vergil's <i>Aeneid</i> is published.		Rome conquers Armenia from Parthia.
16		Marcus Agrippa (Augustus's son-in-law) visits Jerusalem. Herod names his grandson Herod Agrippa.	
10		Herod constructs Caesarea.	
4		Herod dies; his kingdom is divided among his three sons.	