The **24 Priestly Courses**

**Solomon Initiated the 24 Priestly Courses in 951 B.C.E.**

*Solomon initiated* the **24 Priestly Courses** according to **David's** orders beginning with **Course 1 – Jehoiarib** on the weekly **Sabbath** on **Yom Teruah** on **New Moon 7** in **951 B.C.E.** \([1 \text{Tishri} = \text{Sabbath, September 23, 951 B.C.E. (1374336) = Day 1 / Month 7}\) It can be deduced that **Solomon initiated** the **24 Priestly Courses** on a weekly **Sabbath**, a **New Moon** and a **High Sabbath** on the first day of **Year 12** of his reign on **Day 1 / Month 7** in **951 B.C.E.**

![Priestly Course 1 (951 B.C.E.)](image)

At this time the Levitical priests were divided into shifts operating on a rotation basis. These rotations are referred to as the **priestly divisions** or the **sacerdotal courses**. The **24 Priestly Courses** began a little more than **10 months after** major construction on the First Temple was completed in **Month 8** in **Year 11** of **Solomon** in **952 B.C.E.** according to **1 Kings 6:38**.

**1 Kings 6:38** *And in the eleventh year [of Solomon], in the month Bul, which is the eighth month [Month 8], was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.*

The account in **2 Chronicles 8:12-14** says that **Solomon initiated** the **24 Priestly Courses** as his father **David** had commanded.

**2 Chronicles 8:12-14** *For [in 951 B.C.E.] Solomon offered burnt offerings to יהוה on the altar of יהוה which he had built before the vestibule, \(^{12}\) according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly Feasts – the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Shavuot, and the Feast of Tabernacles, \(^{14}\) And, according to the order of David his father, he [on Yom Teruah in 951 B.C.E.] appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties (to*
praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of Elohim had commanded.

According to 1 Kings 8:2 and 2 Chronicles 5:3, all the men of Israel assembled for the Feast of Sukkot which lasts for 7 days beginning on Day 15 / Month 7. However, before the Feast of Sukkot began, they placed the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Set Apart Place on Yom Kippur on Day 10 / Month 7 in 951 B.C.E.

1 Kings 8:1-13 1 Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of יהוה from the City of David, which is Zion. 2 Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the Feast [of Sukkot] in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month. 3 So all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. 4 Then they brought up the ark of יהוה, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the set apart furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 5 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 6 Then [on Yom Kippur on Day 10 / Month 7] the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of יהוה to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Set Apart Place, under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread their two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 8 The poles extended so that the ends of the poles could be seen from the set apart place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 9 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when יהוה made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. 10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the set apart place, that the cloud filled the house of יהוה, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the esteem of יהוה filled the house of יהוה. 11 Then Solomon spoke: “יהוה said He would dwell in the dark cloud. 12 I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in throughout the Age [of Instruction].”

2 Chronicles 5:1-14 1 So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of יהוה was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put them in the treasuries of the house of Elohim. 2 Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of יהוה up from the City of David, which is Zion. 3 Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the Feast [of Sukkot], which was in the seventh month. 4 So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. 5 Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the set apart furnishings that were in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 6 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 7 Then [on Yom Kippur on Day 10 / Month 7] the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of יהוה to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Set Apart Place, under the wings of the cherubim. 8 For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 9 The poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from the set apart place, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 10 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets...
which Moses put there at Horeb, when יהוה made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt. 11 And it came to pass when the priests came out of the Most Set Apart Place (for all the priests who were present had set themselves apart, without keeping to their divisions), 12 and the Levites who were the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets – 13 indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking יהוה, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised יהוה, saying: “For He is good, For His mercy endures throughout the ages [World that Was, Present Age, Age of Desolation, Age of Instruction, Age of the Messiah, Age of Life, World to Come],” that the house, the house of יהוה, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the esteem of יהוה filled the house of Elohim.

**Solomon Initiated the 24 Priestly Courses on New Moon 7**

Jack Finegan has noted that the festivities probably began on **New Moon 7** on **Day 1 / Month 7**.

**Jack Finegan** At the dedication of Solomon’s temple there were many sacrifices and the priests were active; the date was “in the month of Ethanim [the earlier name for Tishri, Table 12], which is the seventh month” (1 Kings 8:2), and the beginning of the festivities was probably on the first day of the month [Day 1 / Month 7] because it was on the eighth day [Day 22 / Month 7] (1 Kings 8:66) that the people were finally sent away at the end.


**Solomon likely initiated** the **24 Priestly Courses** with **Course 1 – Jehoiarib** on **Yom Teruah** on **Day 1 / Month 7** in **951 B.C.E.** [1 Tishri = Sabbath, September 23, 951 B.C.E. (1374336) = Day 1 / Month 7]

The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Most Set Apart Place of the First Temple 10 days later on **Yom Kippur** as this was the one day of the year this chamber was to be entered. [10 Tishri = Monday, October 2, 951 B.C.E. (1374345) = Day 10 / Month 7]

**David Devised the 24 Priestly Courses Before he Died**

At the time Solomon initiated the 24 Priestly Courses in 951 B.C.E., the Levitical Priesthood had already been around for 485 years. According to Hebrew tradition, Moses instituted **8 Priestly Courses**, Samuel instituted **16 Priestly Courses**, and **David** increased them to **24 Priestly Courses**.

**Taanith 27A** R. Hama b. Guria said in the name of Rab: Moses instituted for Israel eight Misharmoth, **four** from [the family of] Eleazar I (1398-1379) and **four** from [the family of] Ithamar; Samuel came and increased them to **sixteen**; **David** came and increased them to **twenty-four**. Rabbi Dr. I Epstein, Translator, The Babylonian Talmud, The Soncino Press Ltd., New York, 1990.

**Jack Finegan** **David** organized sixteen descendants of Eleazar I (1398-1379) and eight descendants of Ithamar as the heads of **twenty-four** divisions of priests, the choice being by lot (1 Chronicles 24:3-19). Jack Finegan, *Handbook of Biblical Chronology*, 237.
The Levitical priests carried out all the daily functions of the temple. One of the daily tasks was to offer the **morning sacrifice** which was performed just **after sunrise** and the **evening sacrifice** which was performed **between the evenings** which refers to the period of evening **twilight** just **after sunset**.

Exodus 29:38-39  
38 “Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day continually. 39 One lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight.”

**David** Ordained that the **24 Priestly Courses**  
Would Minister for 8 Days From Sabbath to Sabbath

The **24 Priestly Courses** changed shifts after both the daily sacrifice and the incense offering were concluded and the “priestly blessing” had been delivered to the Israelites assembled in the temple. **Josephus** informs us that it was **David** who ordained each course should minister eight days from Sabbath to Sabbath.

Josephus, Antiquities 7 / 365  
[David] divided them [the Levites] also into courses: and when he had separated the priests from them, he found of these priests twenty-four courses, sixteen of the house of Eleazar I (1398-1379), and eight of that of Ithamar; and he ordained that each course should minister to Elohim eight days, from Sabbath to Sabbath.


A Scriptural example of this **shift change** can be seen from this account in the time of **Jehoiada I** (c.837-812).

2 Chronicles 23:8  
So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada I (c.837-812) the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada I (c.837-812) the priest had not dismissed the divisions.

The **24 Priestly Courses** Operated on a Continuous 168 Day Cycle

All **24 Priestly Courses** were on duty for the **Festivals** of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. Scholars have proposed several different theories to explain the rotations of the **24 Priestly Courses**. Some have proposed that **Course 1** was always on duty for **Yom Teruah** on New Moon 7, while others have proposed that **Course 1** was always on duty for **New Moon 1**. Then there are variations on these schemes where the courses **skip a week three times a year** since all of the **24 Priestly Courses** were on duty for Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot.

If any of these scenarios were implemented for the **24 Priestly Courses**, then certain courses would work **two weeks** a year while other courses would work **three weeks** a year and this arrangement would **not have been equitable** according to the Torah which said that all of the Levites should have **equal portions to eat**.

Deuteronomy 18:6-8  
6 “So if a Levite comes from any of your gates, from where he dwells among all Israel, and comes with all the desire of his mind to the place which יהוה chooses, 7 then he may serve in the name of יהוה as all his brethren the Levites do, who stand there before יהוה. 8 They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance.”

Therefore, it is **certain** that the **24 Priestly Courses** operated on a **continuous 168 day cycle**. **Daniel Gregg** has **correctly** noted that any **inequitable** arrangement would **not have been legal according to the Torah**.
Daniel Gregg  The point is that every Levitical Priest must be given equal access to the benefits of serving at the Sanctuary, and all those benefits must be divided up equally. If someone says to a priest that he can serve two weeks a year, and to the other priests that they may serve three weeks a year, then the directive is not legal. For it causes some priests to eat unlike their brothers. And the importance of a job at the Sanctuary is underscored by the details of the curse on Eli’s family (1 Samuel 2:36). <www.torahtimes.org/articles/machloqet_cohanim.html>
Daniel Gregg, “The Inception of the Priestly Divisions,” Last modified on 01/19/2015.

David Devised the 24 Priestly Courses With the High Priests Zadok II (c.994-961) and Ahimelech II (c.982-966)

The 24 Priestly Courses were actually devised by David in 962 B.C.E. about 11 years before they were initiated by his son Solomon in 951 B.C.E. For 1 Chronicles 24:3-19 says David created the 24 Priestly Courses along with Zadok II (c.994-961) and Ahimelech II (c.982-966). 16 Courses were chosen from the descendants of Eleazar I (1398-1379) and 8 Courses from the descendants of Ithamar.

1 Chronicles 24:3-19  Then David with Zadok II (c.994-961) of the sons of Eleazar I (1398-1379), and Ahimelech II (c.982-966) of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service. 4 There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar I (1398-1379) than of the sons of Ithamar, and thus they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar I (1398-1379) were sixteen heads of their fathers’ houses, and eight heads of their fathers’ houses among the sons of Ithamar. 5 Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of the house of Elohim, from the sons of Eleazar I (1398-1379) and from the sons of Ithamar. 6 And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, one of the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok II (c.994-961) the priest, Ahimelech II (c.982-966) the son of Abiathar I (c.1003-982), and the heads of the fathers’ houses of the priests and Levites, one father’s house taken for Eleazar I (1398-1379) and one for Ithamar. 7 Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaliah, 8 the third to Harim, the fourth to Scorim, 9 the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, 10 the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, 11 the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, 12 the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, 13 the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, 14 the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immmer, 15 the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez, 16 the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezekel, 17 the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, 18 the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah. 19 This was the schedule of their service for coming into the house of יהוה according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron (1436-1398) their father, as יהוה Elohim of Israel had commanded him.

The 24 Priestly Courses were chosen in 962 B.C.E. shortly before David died. Seder Olam Rabbah says that in the last year David instituted the classes of priests and Levites and wrote the rules for the Temple. This was deduced from the account in 1 Chronicles 26:31 which in context dates to the last year of David in 962 B.C.E.

1 Chronicles 26:31 Among the Hebronites, Jerijah was head of the Hebronites according to his genealogy of the fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought, and there were found among them capable men at Jazer of Gilead.
Ahimelech II (c.982-966) the son of Abiathar I (c.1003-982) was with David when the 24 Priestly Courses were chosen [1 Chronicles 24:6]. It was Ahimelech II’s (c.982-966) son Abiathar II (966-961) who stayed with the Ark of the Covenant in Jerusalem during Absalom’s rebellion in 966 B.C.E., and at this time Abiathar II (966-961) and Zadok II (c.994-961) seemed to be operating in the office of High Priests together [2 Samuel 15:24-35]. So the 24 Priestly Courses were created when Ahimelech II (c.982-966) was still alive but when his son Abiathar II (966-961) was High Priest with Zadok II (c.994-961) in 962 B.C.E.

Course 1 – Jehoiarib Was on Duty when the First Temple Burned in 593 B.C.E.

The Creation Calendar indicates that Course 1 – Jehoiarib would have been on duty when the First Temple burned in Month 5 in 593 B.C.E. The Scriptures give two dates for the destruction of the First Temple. The account in 2 Kings 25:8 says the First Temple burned on Day 7 / Month 5. [7 Av = Wednesday, August 2, 593 B.C.E. (1505044) = Day 7 / Month 5]

2 Kings 25:8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar II (612-569) king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, to Jerusalem.

The account in Jeremiah 52:12-13 says the First Temple burned on Day 10 / Month 5. [10 Av = Sabbath, August 5, 593 B.C.E. (1505047) = Day 10 / Month 5]

Jeremiah 52:12-13 12 Now in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month (which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar II (612-569) king of Babylon), Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 13 He burned the house of יהוה and the king’s house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire.

The dates of Day 7 / Month 5 in 2 Kings 25:8 and Day 10 / Month 5 in Jeremiah 52:12-13 are reconciled in Taanith 29A.
Taanith 29A  On the seventh [Day 7 / Month 5] the heathens entered the Temple and ate therein and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth of Av [Day 8 / Month 5] and towards dusk of the ninth [Day 9 / Month 5] they set fire to it and it continued to burn the whole of that day. Rabbi Dr. I Epstein, (Translator). The Babylonian Talmud. The Soncino Press Ltd., New York, 1990.

Interestingly, the Talmud in Arachin 11B confirms that Course 1 – Jehoiarib was on duty when the First Temple burned on the Fast of the Fifth Month on Day 9 / Month 5 in 593 B.C.E. [9 Av = Friday, August 4, 593 B.C.E. (1505046) = Day 9 / Month 5]

Arachin 11B  Come and hear: R. Jose [Jose ben Halafta] said, Good things are brought about on a good [auspicious] day, and evil ones on a bad one. It is said, The day on which the first Temple was destroyed was the ninth of Ab [Day 9 / Month 5], and it was at the going out of the Sabbath, and at the end of the Seventh Year. The [priestly] guard was that of Jehoiarib, the priests and Levites were standing on their platform singing the song. What song was it? And He has brought upon them their iniquity, and will cut them off in their evil [Psalm 94:23]. They had no time to complete [the psalm with] ‘יהוה our Elohim will cut them off’, before the enemies came and overwhelmed them.


This record in Arachin 11B constitutes evidence that the 24 Priestly Courses ran in a continuous cycle of 168 days (24 Courses x 7 days per course) from the time Solomon initiated them on Day 1 / Month 7 in 951 B.C.E. until the First Temple was destroyed on Day 10 / Month 5 in 593 B.C.E. Even after the Judeans were taken in the Babylonian Captivity, the Levites appear to have kept the count for the 24 Priestly Courses.

It is necessary at this point to clarify that the account in Arachin 11B makes convoluted statements concerning when the First Temple and Second Temple fell. Arachin 11B correctly records that the Second Temple burned on the same date as the First Temple on the Fast of Month 5 on Day 9 / Month 5.

The First Temple burned on the Fast of Month 5 on Day 9 / Month 5 on Yom Shi-shi on the sixth day of the week in 593 B.C.E. [9 Av = Friday, August 4, 593 B.C.E. (1505046) = Day 9 / Month 5]

The Second Temple burned on the Fast of Month 5 on Day 9 / Month 5 on Yom Ri-shon on the first day of the week in 70 C.E. [9 Av = Sunday, August 5, 70 C.E. (1746842) = Day 9 / Month 5]

However, the Talmud in Arachin 11B incorrectly records that both temples fell in a Sabbatical Year. Only the Second Temple fell in a Sabbatical Year.

The First Temple fell on the Fast of Month 5 in Year 2 of Shemittah Cycle 475 in Jubilee Cycle 68 since the creation.

The Second Temple fell on the Fast of Month 5 in Year 7 of Shemittah Cycle 567 in Jubilee Cycle 81 since the creation.

The Talmud in Arachin 11B correctly records that both temples burned at the going out of the Sabbath.

Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 52:12-13 that the First Temple burned at the going out of the Sabbath on Day 10 / Month 5 on Sha-bat on the seventh day of the week in 593 B.C.E. [10 Av = Sabbath, August 5, 593 B.C.E. (1505047) = Day 10 / Month 5]
Josephus said in Wars 6 / 220-235 that the Second Temple burned at the going out of the Sabbath on Day 8 / Month 5 on Sha-bat on the seventh day of the week in 70 C.E. [8 Av = Sabbath, August 4, 70 C.E. (1746841) = Day 8 / Month 5]

Josephus, Wars 6 / 220 & 232-233 220 And now two of the legions had completed their banks on the eighth day of the Month Lous [Ab / Month 5]. Whereupon Titus (79-81) gave orders that the battering-rams should be brought and set over against the western edifice of the inner temple … 232 and now the soldiers had already put fire to the gates, and the silver that was over them quickly carried the flames to the wood that was within it, whence it spread itself all on the sudden, and caught hold of the cloisters. 233 Upon the Judeans seeing this fire all about them, their spirits sunk, together with their bodies, and they were under such astonishment, that not one of them made any haste, either to defend himself or to quench the fire, but they stood as mute spectators of it only. William Whiston, The Works of Josephus, pp. 738-739.

In the Temple Service a Specific Psalm was Sung on Each Day of the Week
In the temple service: Psalm 24 was sung on Yom Ri-shon on the first day of the week; Psalm 48 was sung on Yom She-ni on the second day of the week; Psalm 82 was sung on Yom Shli-shi on the third day of the week; Psalm 94 was sung on Yom Re-vi-i on the fourth day of the week; Psalm 81 was sung on Yom Ham-i-shi on the fifth day of the week; Psalm 93 was sung on Yom Shi-shi on the sixth day of the week; and Psalm 92 was sung on Sha-bat on the seventh day of the week.

The Talmud in Arachin 11B correctly records that the Levitical choir was singing Psalm 94:23 “He will cut them off in their evil” on Yom Re-vi-i the fourth day of the week on Day 7 / Month 5 in 593 B.C.E. when Course 1 – Jehoiarib was on duty when the First Temple fell. [7 Av = Wednesday, August 2, 593 B.C.E. (1505044) = Day 7 / Month 5]

The Second Temple was Completed in Year 6 of Artaxerxes I (465-424)
According to Ezra 7:6-9, it was after the Second Temple was finished that Ezra discreetly left Babylon to go to Jerusalem on New Moon 1 in 458 B.C.E. in Year 7 of Artaxerxes I (465-424). [1 Nisan = Sabbath, April 8, 458 B.C.E. (1554236) = Day 1 / Month 1]

Ezra 7:1-10 1 Now after these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes I (465-424) king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah I (c.593-591), the son of Azariah V (c.767-746), the son of Hilkiyah II (c.782-767), 2 the son of Shallum (c.797-782), the son of Zadok I (c.1161-1140), the son of Ahitub I (c.1182-1161), 3 the son of Amariah I (c.1203-1182), the son of Azariah I (c.1224-1203), the son of Meraioth I (c.1245-1224), 4 the son of Zerahiah (c.1266-1245), the son of Uzzi (c.1287-1266), the son of Bukki (c.1308-1287), 5 the son of Abihua (c.1329-1308), the son of Phinehas (c.1379-1329), the son of Eleazar I (1398-1379), the son of Aaron (1436-1398) the chief priest – 6 this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he was a skilled scribe in the Torah of Moses, which יהוה Elohim of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, according to the hand of יהוה his Elohim upon him. 7 Some of the children of Israel, the priests, the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes I (465-424). 8 And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9 On the first day of the first month he began his journey from
Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his Elohim upon him. For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Torah of יהוה, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Ezra arrived in Jerusalem on New Moon 5 in 458 B.C.E. in Year 7 of Artaxerxes I (465-424). [1 Av = Friday, August 4, 458 B.C.E. (1554354) = Day 1 / Month 5]

4 Priestly Courses Returned to Jerusalem and Reconstituted into 24 Priestly Courses

It is evident from Ezra 2:36-39 that of the 24 Priestly Courses which existed at the end of the First Temple Period, only 4 Priestly Courses returned in 458 B.C.E.

Ezra 2:1 Now these are the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar II (612-569) the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his own city.

Ezra 2:36-39 36 The priests: the sons of Jedediah, of the house of Jeshua [Course 9], nine hundred and seventy-three; 37 the sons of Immer [Course 16], one thousand and fifty-two; 38 the sons of Pashhur [Course 5], one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; 39 the sons of Harim, [Course 3] one thousand and seventeen.

The 4 Priestly Courses who returned were Course 9 – Jeshua, Course 16 – Immer, Course 5 – Malchijah, and Course 3 – Harim. It appears that only one branch of Malchijah’s family returned from Babylon, as Pashhur in Ezra 2:38 appears to refer to Pashhur of Nehemiah 11:12 who was a descendent of Malchijah.

Nehemiah 11:12 Their brethren who did the work of the house were eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaiah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah...

According to Ezra 6:18, these four priestly family lines reconstituted themselves into the 24 Priestly Divisions in order to equitably divide the tasks of performing the temple service.

Ezra 6:18 They assigned the priests to their divisions and the Levites to their divisions, over the service of Elohim in Jerusalem, as it is written in the Book of Moses.

The Second Temple was Dedicated in Year 8 of Artaxerxes I (465-424)

In Antiquities 11 / 107, Josephus says the Second Temple was dedicated on Day 23 / Month 12. [23 Adar = Sunday, March 9, 456 B.C.E. (1554937) = Day 23 / Month 12]

Josephus, Antiquities 11 / 107-108 107 And in the ninth year of the reign of Darius (465-424), on the twenty-third day of the twelfth month, which is by us called Adar, but by the Macedonians Dystrus, the priests and Levites, and the other multitude of the Israelites, offered sacrifices, as the renovation of their former prosperity after their captivity, and because they had now the temple rebuilt, a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve kids of the goats, according to the number of their tribes (for so many are the tribes of the Israelites); and this last for the sins of every tribe. The priests also and the Levites, set the porters at every gate according to the laws of Moses. The Judeans also built the cloisters of the inner temple that were round about the temple itself. William Whiston, The Works of Josephus, p. 293.
Josephus *incorrectly* said that the Second Temple was dedicated in Year 9 of Artaxerxes I (465-424), when it actually was dedicated at the very end of Year 8 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) exactly 8 days before Year 9 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) began. Although the date of the dedication of the Second Temple is *not* given in Scripture, the ceremony is mentioned in *Ezra 6:16-17*.

**Ezra 6:16-17**  
16 Then the children of *Israel*, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of *Elohim* with joy. 17 And they offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of *Elohim*, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all *Israel* twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of *Israel*.

**Course 1 – Jehoiarib Was on Duty at the Second Temple Dedication in 456 B.C.E.**

The *Creation Calendar* shows that **Course 1 – Jehoiarib** came on duty on Day 22 / Month 12 in Year 8 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) in the spring of 456 B.C.E. exactly 1 day before the dedication. [22 Adar = Sabbath, March 8, 456 B.C.E. (1554936) = Day 22 / Month 12]

The Passover After the Dedication was in Year 9 of Artaxerxes I (465-424)  
According to *Ezra 6:19*, the **Passover** was kept in Jerusalem on Day 14 / Month 1. [14 Nisan = Sabbath, March 29, 456 B.C.E. (1554957) = Day 14 / Month 1]

**Ezra 6:19-22**  
19 And the descendants of the captivity kept the **Passover** on the fourteenth day of the first month. 20 For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves; all of them were ritually clean. And they slaughtered the **Passover** lambs for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 Then the children of *Israel* who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the filth of the nations of the land in order to seek the יהוה Elohim of *Israel*. 22 And they kept the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** seven days with joy; for יהוה made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of *Assyria* (*Cyrus Darius Artaxerxes I (465-424) of Persia*) who controlled *Assyria* at the time toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of Elohim, the Elohim of *Israel*.  

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According to Ezra 6:22, the Feast of Unleavened Bread was kept for seven days from Day 15 / Month 1 until Day 21 / Month 1. [15 Nisan = Sunday, March 30, 456 B.C.E. (1554958) = Day 15 / Month 1] - [21 Nisan = Sabbath, April 5, 456 B.C.E. (1554964) = Day 21 / Month 1]

Josephus correctly indicates in Antiquities 11 / 109-110 that the first Passover and Unleavened Bread that were observed after the dedication of the Second Temple occurred in Year 9 of Artaxerxes I (465-424).

Josephus, Antiquities 11 / 109-110 109 And as the Feast of Unleavened Bread was at hand, in the first month, which, according to the Macedonians is called Xanthicus, but according to us Nisan [Month 1], all the people ran together out of the villages to the city and celebrated the festival, having purified themselves, with their wives and children, according to the law of their country; 110 and they offered the sacrifice which was called the Passover, on the fourteenth day of the same month, and feasted seven days, and spared no cost, but offered whole burnt offerings to Elohim, and performed sacrifices of thanksgiving, because Elohim had led them again to the land of their fathers, and to the laws there to belonging, and had rendered the mind of the king of Persia favorable to them. William Whiston, The Works of Josephus, p. 293.

It Was Only 10 Years after the Passover in Year 9 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) That the Judeans Were in Great Distress in Year 19 of Artaxerxes I (465-424)

According to Nehemiah 1:1-7, it was about 10 years later in Month 9 of Year 19 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) in 446 B.C.E., in Nehemiah’s twentieth year of service to the king since the accession of Artaxerxes I (465-424) in 465 B.C.E., that the children of Israel were in great distress for not keeping the commandments, statutes and ordinances of Elohim.

Nehemiah 1:1-7 1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev [Month 9], in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, 2 that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Judeans who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, “The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.” 4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the Elohim of heaven. 5 And I said: “I pray, יהוה Elohim of heaven, Oh great and awesome Elohim, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, 6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

As the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and the gates were burned, the temple service obviously ceased and the 24 Priestly Courses were not able to perform their duty for some time. According to Nehemiah 2:1-8, it was about 3 months later in Month 1 of Year 20 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) in 445 B.C.E. that a decree was made for the Judeans to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, the gates, the palace and the temple.
Nehemiah 2:1-8  

1 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan [Month 1], in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes I (464-424), when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before.  2 Therefore the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.” So I became dreadfully afraid,  3 and said to the king, “May the king live throughout the ages [Present Age, Age of Instruction, Age of the Messiah, Age of Life, World to Come]? Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?”  4 Then the king said to me, “What do you request?” So I prayed to the Elohim of heaven.  

And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.”  6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), “How long will your journey be? And when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.  7 Furthermore I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah,  8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy.” And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my Elohim upon me.

According to Nehemiah 6:15, Nehemiah rebuilt the walls in 52 days finishing on Day 25 / Month 6 in 445 B.C.E. [25 Elul = Tuesday, September 2, 445 B.C.E. (1559132) = Day 25 / Month 6]

Nehemiah 6:15  

So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul [Month 6], in fifty-two days.

The Levites were appointed at this time according to Nehemiah 7:1-2.

Nehemiah 7:1-2  

1 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed,  2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the leader of the citadel, for he was a faithful man and feared Elohim more than many.

Course 1 – Jehoiarib Was on Duty at the Wall Dedication in 445 B.C.E.
The Creation Calendar shows that Course 1 – Jehoiarib would have begun their shift on Sabbath on Day 29 / Month 6 in Year 20 of Artaxerxes I (465-424) in 445 B.C.E. [29 Elul = Sabbath, September 6, 445 B.C.E. (1559136) = Day 29 / Month 6]

Course 1 – Jehoiarib would have been on duty at the dedication of the wall on New Moon 7 in 445 B.C.E. [1 Tishri = Monday, September 8, 445 B.C.E. (1559138) = Day 1 / Month 7] For according to Nehemiah 12:34 and Nehemiah 12:41, the wall was dedicated on Yom Teruah on the Day of Trumpets on New Moon 7, exactly 6 days after the walls were finished.

Nehemiah 12:27-43 27 Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the villages of the Netophathites, 29 from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem. 30 Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall. 31 So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. One went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate. 32 After them went Hoshiaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35 and some of the priests' sons with trumpets – Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36 and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of Elohim. And Ezra the scribe went before them. 37 By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward. 38 The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way, and I was behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, 39 and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by the Gate of the Prison. 40 So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of Elohim, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me, 41 and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; 42 also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director. 43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for Elohim had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

The Levites ministered at this time according to Nehemiah 12:44-47.

Nehemiah 12:44-47 44 And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered. 45 Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their Elohim and the charge of the purification, according to the command of David and Solomon his son. 46 For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to Elohim. 47 In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each...
day. They also consecrated set apart things for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated them for the children of Aaron (1436-1398).

The Levitical Priesthood Determined a Priest’s Duties by a Lottery System

By the time the First Temple was dedicated under Solomon in 951 B.C.E., the Levitical Priesthood was highly evolved and carried out its duties with great diligence and equity.

Chaim Richman  The kohanim who were responsible for the daily service in the Set Apart Temple were divided into 24 separate shifts made up of men who hailed from all parts of the land. The duration of each shift’s duties was for one week, when they would be entirely responsible for all of the daily functions in the Temple. Rather like military reservists, each priest would be expected to perform his obligatory period of service in the Temple. The shifts were further divided into six clans, or family branches, each serving for one day, but on the Sabbath all six clans worked together.

All wanted the opportunity to conduct the services of Elohim but these were only a specific number of daily tasks, and it was impossible for everyone to attend to these at once. In order to give each priest an equal opportunity to officiate, special lotteries were held each day and the members of the family clan who were serving that day would participate in this drawing. Four separate drawings were held daily and thus the courtyard was filled with the priests a number of times throughout the day.

… The first of the daily lotteries determined which priest would carry out the removal of the ashes from the altar, around which all the service of Elohim was centered, including the Passover sacrifice, the bringing of the firstfruits on Shavuot and the rejoicing with lulav branches on Sukkot … Following the raking of the ashes, the next task was to bring new wood up to the altar for the large fire. After both the large arrangement and the smaller one for incense had been lit, the priests descended from the altar and returned to the Chamber of Hewn Stone for the second lottery.

Returning to the Chamber of Hewn Stone after the wood piles had been arranged atop the altar, the priests once again gathered for the second daily lottery. This drawing would determine the distribution of a number of various assignments pertaining to the sacrifice and offering of the tamid, the daily sacrifice: which priest would slaughter the sacrifice; who would collect its blood and dash it upon the altar; who would remove the excess ash from the inner (golden) incense altar within the Sanctuary; who would attend to the wicks of the menorah, cleansing the cups of the used oil and ash; which six priests would bring the parts of the sacrifice to the altar’s ramp; who would bring the fine flour for the accompanying meal offering up to the altar; who would bring up the High Priest’s meal offering; and who would pour the wine libation.

Immediately following the lottery, the priests chosen to remove the ashes from the incense altar and to attend to the menorah prepared themselves and the vessels required to carry out their respective services. These vessels were a golden basket which held 2 ½ kavim (about 5 ½ liters); an oil container, shaped like a large wine goblet and also fashioned of gold; and two keys. They gave these keys to the Levite gatekeeper on duty; the Levites were entrusted with guarding all the temple gates. The Levite who was appointed to open the sanctuary took these keys from the
priests and, opening the small door to the right, entered first into an antechamber and then into the area of the Sanctuary itself. Reaching the great gates, he removed the door-bolt and the locks and opened wide the gates.

The act of opening the Sanctuary gates had great significance, for the morning tamid sacrifice could not be prepared for offering upon the altar until they had been opened. In fact, the priest who had been assigned to this task would not commence until he actually heard the sound of the great gates opening. The overseer then declared to the priests: “Let one go up to a high place in the Temple, to see whether the time has arrived to offer the morning sacrifice!” If the night had indeed begun to wane, the watchman cried out “Barkai! The day has dawned!” Then the priests waited for the second announcement when he in the high place would call out, “The entire eastern horizon is illuminated.” Once the eastern sky began to lighten, one of those down below called up to his colleague: “Does the glow extend all the way to Hebron?”

If the watchman answered “Yes,” the proper time had come for offering the tamid daily sacrifice, and the gates of the Sanctuary were opened. The overseer instructed the priests who would be in attendance, “Bring a lamb from the Chamber of Lambs!” At all times a minimum of six animals previously checked and certified as blemish-free were kept for the daily sacrifices.

… After both the daily sacrifice and the incense offering were concluded, the priests would raise their hands and deliver the “priestly blessing” upon the congregation of Israel assembled in the Set Apart Temple. On the Sabbath, an extra blessing was added, with which the outgoing shift of priests greeted the incoming one: “May He who causes His Name to dwell in this House, cause love, brotherhood, peace and friendship to dwell among you.”

The third lottery was unique. This was held to determine who would have a chance to officiate at the incense offering, which, according to Judean tradition, was the most acceptable part of the Temple service in Elohim’s eyes; it was influential in subduing evil, and its characteristic quality aided in amplifying the aspect of Elohim’s mercy and benevolence in the world.

… The fourth daily lottery was held in participation of all priests to determine who would bring the parts of the sacrifice from the altar’s ramp up to the top, where the sacrifices were consumed on the altar’s fire. Chaim Richman, A House of Prayer for All Nations, The Temple Institute and Carta, Jerusalem, 1997, Adapted Excerpts from pp. 12-15.

The Angel Gabriel Appeared to Zachariah During Course 8 – Abijah in 4 B.C.E.

Zachariah was on duty during the Course 8 – Abijah in the spring of 4 B.C.E. and it was at this time that he encountered the angel Gabriel immediately before his wife Elizabeth conceived a son who would be named John the Immerser. The conception and birth of John the Immerser is intimately linked with the conception and birth of מָשָׂאֵל Messiah. Therefore, the chronology concerning the Course 8 – Abijah in the spring of 4 B.C.E. must dovetail perfectly with the birth of מָשָׂאֵל Messiah in the autumn of 3 B.C.E.

Luke 1:5-23  5 There was in the days of Herod [the Great (37-1)], the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachariah, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron (1436-1398), and her name was Elizabeth.  6 And they were both righteous before Elohim, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of הָעָם blameless.  7 But they had no child,
because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. 8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before Elohim in the order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of יהוה. 10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 Then an angel of יהוה appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zachariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of יהוה, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Set Apart Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to יהוה their Elohim. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for יהוה.” 18 And Zachariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.” 19 And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of Elohim, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.” 21 And the people waited for Zachariah, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. 23 So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

The Creation Calendar confirms that Course 8 – Abijah was on duty from Day 21 / Month 3 to Day 28 / Month 3 in 4 B.C.E. [21 Sivan = Sabbath, June 16, 4 B.C.E. (1720129) = Day 21 / Month 3] - [28 Sivan = Sabbath, June 23, 4 B.C.E. (1720136) = Day 28 / Month 3]

Figure 5: Priestly Course 8 (4 B.C.E.)

Zachariah drew the lot to burn incense in the Second Temple on Day 21 / Month 3 in 4 B.C.E. when Gabriel told him he would have a son named John. Zachariah was from Course 8 – Abijah according to Luke 1:5.

Zachariah returned home on Day 29 / Month 3 after the Sabbath was over. [29 Sivan = Sunday, June 24, 4 B.C.E. (1720137) = Day 29 / Month 3] John was likely conceived the next day on the summer solstice on New Moon 4. [1 Tammuz = Monday, June 25, 4 B.C.E. (1720138) = Day 1 / Month 4]
John was likely born 266 days later on New Moon 1 in 3 B.C.E. [1 Nisan, Monday, March 18, 3 B.C.E. (1720404) = Day 1 / Month 1] This was exactly 6 months to the day before Messiah was born on New Moon 7 in 3 B.C.E., the date proposed by Dr. Ernest L. Martin. [1 Tishri = Thursday, September 12, 3 B.C.E. (1720582) = Day 1 / Month 7] From the testimony in Luke 1:5-23, it appears the 24 Priestly Courses ran in a continuous 168 day cycle until the end of the Second Temple Period in 70 C.E.

Zachariah and his son John the Immerser belonged to Course 8 – Abijah. The number eight signifies new beginnings and the completion of the covenant. It was during Course 8 – Abijah that the angel Gabriel told Zachariah that he would have a son named John who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children – towards the covenant.

Every week begins on the eighth day after seven days are completed. There were eight people who survived the flood because Noah was in covenant with יהוה. There are eight notes in a perfect octave. Israelite boys are circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of the covenant in their flesh. Shemini Atzeret on Day 22 / Month 7 is the eighth day assembly and the last day in the Festival Cycle representing the completion of the covenant.

In the 7000 Year Plan of Elohim, the final completion of the covenant will occur in the eighth millennium when perfect justice occurs in The World to Come after seven millennial days have expired.

John the Immerser was Commissioned as a Levitical Priest in the Second Temple During Course 8 – Abijah in 28 C.E.

John the Immerser became eligible for the Levitical Priesthood when he was 30 years old on New Moon 1 in 28 C.E. [1 Nisan, Wednesday, March 17, 28 C.E. (1731361) = Day 1 / Month 1] John the Immerser was in the wilderness until the day of his commissioning in Israel.

Luke 1:80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he lived in the wilderness until the day of his commissioning in Israel.

Daniel Gregg In Luke 1:80, it says, “and he was in the wilderness until the day of his ordination.” The Greek word used here is αναδειξεως. It means a commissioning or installation. <www.torahtimes.org/articles/birth_of_messiah.html>

Daniel Gregg, “When was Messiah Born,” Last modified on 03/21/2015.

Luke 1:80 refers to John the Immerser’s commissioning as a Levitical priest and he was 30 years old at this time, as Levitical priests were only eligible to serve when they were 30-50 years of age.

Numbers 4:1-3 1 Then יהוה spoke to Moses and Aaron (1436-1398), saying: 2 “Take a census of the sons of Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers’ house, 3 from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.”

When John declared that יהושע was the Lamb of Elohim in John 1:29 and John 1:36, it had a certain meaning to those who heard it. For a sacrifice to Elohim was only acceptable after it had been inspected and certified as such by a Levitical priest.

Leviticus 22:20-25 20 “Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. 21 And whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to יהוה, to fulfill his vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be...
no defect in it. 22 Those that are blind or broken or maimed, or have an ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to יהוה, nor make an offering by fire of them on the altar to יהוה. 23 Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb too long or too short you may offer as a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted. 24 ‘You shall not offer to יהוה what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make any offering of them in your land. 25 Nor from a foreigner’s hand shall you offer any of these as the bread of your Elohim, because their corruption is in them, and defects are in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.’”

According to Luke 1:80, John the Immerser was in the wilderness until the day of his commissioning in Israel. From the Apostle John’s testimony in John 1:28, it is evident that John the Immerser was in Bethabara beyond the Jordan when he immersed יהושע Messiah on the Sabbath on Day 27 / Month 12 in 28 C.E. [27 Adar = Sabbath, March 13, 28 C.E. (1731357) = Day 27 / Month 12]
The Daily Sacrifice Failed in the Second Temple on the Fast of Month 4 in 70 C.E. As Course 4 – Seorim was Finishing and Course 5 – Malchijah was to Begin

Figure 7: Priestly Course 5 (70 C.E.)

According to Josephus and the Arachin 11B, the Second Temple burned, the continual sacrifice ceased on the Fast of Month 4 on Day 17 / Month 4 in 70 C.E. [17 Tammuz = Sabbath, July 14, 70 C.E. (1746820) = Day 17 / Month 4] Thus, while Course 1 – Jehoiarib was on duty when the First Temple burned in 593 B.C.E., Course 4 – Seorim was finishing and Course 5 – Malchijah was scheduled to begin when the daily sacrifice was suspended on the Fast of Month 4 in 70 C.E.

Josephus, Wars 6 / 93-94  

93 And now Titus (79-81) gave orders to his soldiers that were with him to dig up the foundations of the tower of Antonia, and make him a ready passage for his army to come up; 94 while he himself had Josephus brought to him (for he had been informed that on that very day, which was the seventeenth day of Panemus [Day 17 / Month 4], the sacrifice called “the Daily Sacrifice” had failed, and had not been offered to Elohim for want of men to offer it, and that the people were grievously troubled at it).


Arachin 11B  The same happened the second time [the second Sanctuary’s destruction]. Now what need was there for song? Would you say that it was on account of the [daily] burnt-offering? But that could not be, for on the seventeenth of Tammuz [Day 17 / Month 4] the continual sacrifice had been abolished … The song of the day was: The earth is Yahweh’s and the fullness thereof, 26 … Ps. XXIV, 1. [Psalm 24:1] This is the song for Sunday [Yom Ri-shon]; every day had its song definitely arranged.


Arachin 11B correctly records that Psalm 24 was being sung on Day 17 / Month 4 on Yom Ri-shon on the first day of the week in 70 C.E. [17 Tammuz = Sabbath, July 14, 70 C.E. (1746820) = Day 17 / Month 4] Arachin 11B contains evidence that the seven day sequence has never been broken. For Psalm 94:23, “He has brought upon them their iniquity and will cut them off in their evil,” would have been sung on Day 7 / Month 5 on Yom Re-vi-i on the fourth day of the week in 593 B.C.E. And Psalm 24:1, “The earth is
Yahweh’s and the fullness thereof,” would have been sung on Day 9 / Month 5 on Yom Ri-shon on the first day of the week in 70 C.E. Elohim has a covenant with the day and the night.

Jeremiah 33:20-22  

“This is what יהוה says: If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that they are not daily and nightly in their season, 21 then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he should not have a Son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites the priests, My servants. 22 As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the progeny of David My servant, and the Levites who serve Me.”

Likewise, the testimony in Luke 1:5-23 constitutes evidence that the 24 Priestly Courses were observed faithfully until 4 B.C.E. as the chronology concerning the Course 8 – Abijah in the spring of 4 B.C.E. dovetails perfectly with the birth of יהושע Messiah in the autumn of 3 B.C.E. Zachariah from Course 8 – Abijah was on duty from Day 21 / Month 3 to Day 28 / Month 3 in 4 B.C.E.

Zachariah returned home on Day 29 / Month 3 after the Sabbath was over. John was likely conceived on New Moon 4 and born 266 days later on New Moon 1 in 3 B.C.E. exactly 6 months to the day before יהושע Messiah was born on New Moon 7 in 3 B.C.E.

There is no valid reason to doubt that the 24 Priestly Courses ran on a 168 day cycle (24 Courses x 7 days) from the time that Solomon initiated them on New Moon 7 in 951 B.C.E. until the daily sacrifice failed on the Fast of Month 4 in 70 C.E. The 24 Priestly Courses ran for a total of 2217 complete cycles until they ended in the 2218th cycle. They were observed faithfully for 1019 years, 10 months, 17 days.