

# **THE INTERCONTINENTAL CHURCH OF GOD**

## **SPECIFIC BIBLE STUDIES - JESUS PART 1 E**

PART 1-----ITEM E-----Birth Year-----Quote from Unger's Bible Dictionary :

CHRONOLOGY, NEW TESTAMENT (excerpt) ---From Unger's Bible Dictionary

The Two Registrations. There has been in the past an interesting question: How could Cyrenius conduct an enrollment of the Jews at the birth of Christ, 4 B.C. when it is a known fact that he was appointed governor of Syria and made a registry ten years later, namely, in A.D. 6? The answer is that Cyrenius was twice appointed to this service. In the first instance it was a census of the population, taken with a view of replacing their tribute to the empire in produce by a head tax in money; and in the second it was a registration of their property. The census occurred 4 B.C. to A.D. 1. It was begun by Sentius Saturninus, was then continued by Quintilius Varus until 4 B.C. and concluded by Cyrenius from the year 4 B.C. to A.D. 1, the time of the nativity. Luke expressly says, "This was the first census" (2:2). The second enrollment by Cyrenius occurred A.D. 10-14, according to the correct chronology.

Now, Luke makes historical notation of both enrollments in a way that indicates a perfect understanding of them on the part of his contemporaries. He refers to the first as a principal fact connecting it with the birth of Jesus; he refers to the second enrollment incidentally, in narrating what Gamaliel said in defense of the apostles before the Sanhedrin. In recounting different rebellions against the Romans in that country, Gamaliel said, "After this man Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census" (cf. ). It is of this registration that Josephus says: "Under his administration [Cyrenius's as procurator of Judea] it was that a certain Galilean whose name was Judas prevailed with his countrymen to revolt" (Wars 2.8.1); "I mean that Judas who caused the people to revolt when Cyrenius came to take an account of the estates of the Jews" (Ant. 20.5.2).

The latest word on these enrollments is that of the eminent Augustus W. Zumpt, the classical scholar and archaeologist of Berlin, whose researches have secured us "full historical probability; and whose conclusions of the date of the birth of Christ at the time of the census taken 4 B.C. by Cyrenius is endorsed by the scholarly Mommsen, and accords with the view of Ideler, Bergmann, Browne, Ussher, and Sanclemente" (Schaff).