This work is a collection of ten essays, nine of which have been previously published in some form. Most of the chapters (1-6) are on calendrical questions, two are on chronological questions (7 and 10), and two consider both (8 and 9). The work also includes indexes of biblical references, ancient literature, subjects, and modern authors.

Appropriate to a work on the divisions and calculations of time, chapter 1 discusses the smallest natural division of time, the day. The author discusses briefly the division of the day into watches or hours, and then moves on to the larger question of when the day begins and ends. Two main bodies of evidence are found: either the day begins and ends at nightfall, or it begins and ends at daybreak. The author concludes that these two forms of reckoning are not in conflict, however, but coexist in many of the writings examined.

Chapter 2 considers the Sabbath and Sunday in early Christianity. The chapter contrasts Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism, concluding that the former regards the Sabbath "as a creation ordinance, common to all mankind," the latter as "an ordinance peculiar to Israel" (p. 13). Although both views are represented in the NT, the author's treatment shows that the view of Palestinian Judaism is predominant in Jesus and Paul. Although the author acknowledges the problem of distinguishing too sharply between Hellenistic and Palestinian Judaism (p. 13), his discussion throughout this section seems to fall into just such a dichotomy. The author then discusses the Sabbath and the Lord's Day in early Christianity, tentatively concluding that the two were probably celebrated side by side in the first century; he then shows the similarities between the two: both are weekly, both are commemorative, and both include injunctions to worship, practice mercy, and rest.

Chapter 3 considers the origins of Easter and Whitsun (Pentecost) and chapter 4 the dating of Christmas. The author concludes that Easter probably originated ca. 110 in
Antioch and Whitsun ca. 190 in Carthage. He concludes that a midwinter date for Christ's birth is an early tradition (middle of the second century) but does not push its historicity; he then embarks on an enormous and unrelated discussion of the sequence of the priestly courses "for its own sake" (p. 79).

Chapters 5 through 8 deal with the Essene calendar and its implications. The author concludes that although the Essene calendar was completely theoretical and could not be reconciled with observed phenomena, the Essenes meant it to be followed literally without intercalation. Chapter 6 combines this conclusion with a discussion of the priestly and Levitical courses, concluding that the idiosyncrasies of the Qumran psalter are due to the Essenes' liturgical system. Chapter 7 attempts to redate the beginnings and developments of the Pharisees, Essenes, and Sadducees. The author pushes the beginning of Pharisaism back to the middle of the fourth century BCE and the beginnings of the Essene and Sadducean movements to the middle of the third century BCE. As usual in such discussions, it is not the novelty of the dating that is questionable, but whether the definition of the "proto-" stage of a movement is precise and supportable. In this chapter the author also raises and rejects the hypothesis that the Qumran community was Sadducean and reaffirms the conventional identification of them as Essenes. Chapter 8 examines how the time of the coming of the Messiah was calculated by the Essenes (the majority of the chapter is devoted to their calculations), Hellenistic Judaism, Pharisees, and early Christians. The author concludes that all the Jewish groups would have had high Messianic expectations around the turn of the common era.

Chapters 9 and 10 turn to NT questions. Chapter 9 examines the dating of the crucifixion, concluding that the year of the crucifixion cannot be decided with precision because the intercalation of a thirteenth month into the Jewish calendar had not become regularized by the first century. The author also attempts to reconcile the Synoptic and Johannine chronologies of the crucifixion. Finally, chapter 10 shows how the three and a half years of Revelation (Rev 11:2; 12:6; 13:5) are an interpretation of Daniel 7 and 9 and are used by John to refer to the time of the church between Christ's two comings.

The work is to be commended for the detailed discussions and large quantities of information it provides, although the author's use of secondary sources is somewhat scanty. For anyone addressing questions of dating in the NT and intertestamental literature it will certainly prove valuable. But the fact that the essays were originally published separately gives the book a rather disjointed character, with very little attempt to relate the chapters to one another or to give any overall conclusions. This lack of summaries and conclusions is also present within chapters, however, where I often did not know why a particular question was being discussed or what larger issue was at stake in its resolution. Although this is perhaps only a stylistic and not a substantive problem, it nonetheless makes the work unnecessarily hard to follow.

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Finally, I cannot help but raise a merely practical but by no means inconsequential problem with this book: its cost. Although the book is physically well made, there is nothing in its production (such as large format, large number of pages, or large number of illustrations) that should make its cost so prohibitive; the fact that most of the material is republished certainly adds to the injury. Most of us will never be able to afford such a book, and this is a disservice both to the authors and to potential readers.