

His Star

In the East

**The Heavens Declare
the Glory of God!**



"...and the desire of all nations shall come..."

Haggai 2:7

The Miracle of Christmas

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HIS STAR IN THE EAST

"...for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." - Matthew 2:2

It is likely that in America Christmas is still the most favorite time of year. We can lament the fact that perhaps this is so because of the materialistic push to spend money we do not have for gifts that others do not need. We can also lament the fact that most of the symbols now so prevalent at Christmas no longer clearly point to its origin and the fact that *Jesus is the reason for the season*. Regardless of the origins of our modern Christmas symbols, Christians have increased concerns that Christ's birth is being covered up by materialism.

But now post-September 11, the hope that arises from the original story of Christmas is needed more than ever. This hope cannot be delivered by merely a creation of classic literature. No amount of presents will offset the loss and uncertainty of our times. We need something more substantial to believe in, for we need more than myths and fantasy. We need to be reminded that Christ's birth was miraculous in every sense of the word, and it really did happen just as the Scriptures declare. And if it did, real hope does exist because there is a God who sent His Son into the world to save us from our sin.

Our focus this morning is Christ's star mentioned in the verse above. Whether an amazing natural conjunction of planets and constellations or the supernatural creation of God, or both, we can be assured this morning that God always confirms His Word. The Scriptures declare that Christ was born *"in the fullness of time"* (Galatians 4:4) and this was true historically, astronomically, and spiritually.

Historically, it was a difficult time for Jews to live under Roman rule. Herod was King of Judea, but he was not a Jew, and he was a terrible tyrant. Anyone who might compete for the throne he executed, even his second wife. He was paranoid with power, and always looking over his shoulder.¹ No wonder he did not take kindly to the news from foreign dignitaries that a new King had been born. Which leads us to our first question: *who were these Wise Men from the East?* There must have been something quite significant in their background and training in order to "read the heavens" at the perfect historical moment.

Astronomically, *what was the Star in the east?* The Greek word used here for *"in the east"* is *anatole* and literally means that this "star" rose in the east like all of the constellations and stars.² In other words, it rotated with the heavens and initially acted like a star. Whether one or more of the lights seen at the time of Christ's birth were supernatural signs never seen in the sky before or since, we can be certain that it acted in such a way as to catch the attention of astronomers. However, it must have been ordinary enough to be neglected by Herod and his court astronomers.

Spiritually, the Jewish nation was at its darkest point in history. Its own temple had been destroyed and rebuilt by Herod himself. Most of the leaders were more interested in political correctness than fearing the God of their fathers. They would rather be in line for Roman favors than adhering to God's Law. All of Israel was longing for a Messiah.³ *Why did Israel fail to worship Christ when He came?*

Who were the Wise Men?

"...for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." - Matthew 2:2

¹Carroll, Susan, S., *The Star of Bethlehem: an Astronomical and Historical Perspective*, www.sciastro.net/portia/articles/thestar.htm

²*Strong's Concordance*, McDonald Publishing Company, N.T. word #395.

³Edersheim, Alfred., *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, MacDonald Publishing Co., 1883., Volume 1, Book 2, p. 180



The Wise Men of Matthew 2:2 that came from the East have been objects of study for centuries. It is known that Magi were court astronomers, probably from Persia, that could have included Jewish exiles. They often consulted rulers of the day to give guidance in political affairs.⁴ They traveled in groups of twelve, and often with servants, so probably this caravan numbered close to twenty-four.⁵ The idea that three Kings visited Jesus in the manger right after his birth is not accurate on three accounts. First, there were more than three; second, there is no Biblical evidence they were kings, and according to Scripture they visited Jesus once he had moved to a house several months after his birth.

Court astronomers studied the original meanings of the constellations passed down for centuries. Nebuchadnezzar, around 600 BC, kept court astronomers, but by then interpretation of the signs in the skies had been corrupted into astrology so that individuals thought the stars *caused* events on earth when in fact originally they were known to simply *confirm* events caused by God. Daniel was promoted to head "magus" due to his interpretation of dreams toward the end of the Babylonian era, and it is well known that he remained in a high position under the Persian rule of Cyrus.⁶ It is possible that the Magi spoken of in Matthew 2 were descendants of those disciplined by Daniel himself out of Persia. We know this through the contemporary writings of Philo at the time of Christ.⁷

It is obvious from our text that these Magi already understood by what they saw in the heavens that an important *king* was *born*, and that he was a *Jew*. What we must explore is an overview of what court astronomers may have studied in the heavens, particularly as they were compatible with Jewish thought which would have rejected astrological worship of the heavenly bodies. In order for us to understand this, we need to ponder some significant Biblical teachings from the Old and New Testaments that were understood by Daniel and passed down through him to court astronomers in Persia.

What did the Wise Men know about the Heavens?

"And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years." - Genesis 1:14

When God created the heavens He had two purposes in mind. The first was that the heavens would be "signs." The Hebrew word used for sign is "*ensign*" or picture.⁸ From the beginning, God intended the heavens to give us pictures of His eternal truth. The second purpose was for the heavens to rotate across the sky in such precision that we could delineate seasons, days and years by their rotation. The definitions of month, year and day are given in terms of the rotation of the sun, moon and earth today.

The Bible also declares in Psalm 147:4 that God named the stars. In the book of Job (probably the oldest book in the Bible, dating to at least 2,000 BC and the time of Abraham), it states that only God's power has caused the *Mazzaroth* to come forth across the sky.⁹ The Hebrew word for "mazzaroth" is *constellation* and indicates that the signs of the zodiac (or groupings of stars) are timed in their rotation

⁴See www.bethlehemstar.net/stage.htm and www.ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/p_greetham/wisemen/wmsoc2.html

⁵*Christmas Star*, an historical video on the Star of Bethlehem published by Acorn Media Publishing, Inc., 1995.

⁶See Daniel 6; Isaiah 44-45 for God's prophecies concerning Cyrus; and 2nd Chronicles 36:22; Ezra 1:1-2 for completion.

⁷www.bethlehemstar.net/stage.htm, page 7

⁸Gesenius' *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, Baker Book House, 1979, word #226, page 24.

⁹Job 38:32.

and allow us to know the season.¹⁰ Ancient cultures amazingly preserve the same basic twelve constellations together with their decans or minor constellations of three for each of the twelve. Thus, forty-eight arbitrary groupings of stars into pictures (derived from the original names of the stars) date from Creation. Most cultures attribute the origin of these star names to Adam, Seth and Enoch.¹¹

All three of these individuals lived hundreds of years and had plenty of time to observe the heavens. Adam was the first of God's creation and Seth carried on the work by leading a revival in the third generation (and both lived more than 900 years). Enoch is credited with giving one of the earliest prophecies of the coming of the Lord and was taken by God to heaven at an early age of 365 years!¹² But we have more than the evidence of ancient cultures passing down names for groupings of stars that could be read as pictures. We have the Word of God spelling this out directly!

*"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.
But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth.
And their words unto the ends of the world." - Romans 10:17-18*

Paul states that the gospel revealed in the written Word has previously been heard or understood by "all the world," (this is also stated indirectly in Romans 1:20.) But how? Since Paul is quoting from Psalm 19, let us consult the original context of this passage for our answer.

*"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork.
Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.
There is no speech (or language) where there voice is not heard.
Their line (or the ecliptic) is gone out through all the earth, and their words (pictures)
to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun (path of the sun)." - Psalm 19:1-4*

The heavens declared the glory of God and the message of the gospel! But how did the whole world understand this message without the barrier of language differences? The answer involves the ancient pictures of the zodiac! The line or path of this message we call the ecliptic, or the path the sun travels through the twelve constellations. During the day, the sun (symbolically representing the Son of God, Christ) overshadows all, but at night groups of stars display the knowledge of His Lordship in the earth.

The second six verses of the Psalm indicate that the law of God, or the written Word, is perfect. Though the constellations were named early in history, the original pictures and names are not all known now. Corrupted by years of cultural decline, many original pictures we will never know. Though all of creation illustrates the eternal truths of God (Romans 1:20), natural law and creation is only a dim view of the truth. Only the Scriptures provide the absolute record of eternal truth. The heavens are never to become a substitute for the Word, they are merely confirmations. What is now known as astrology is such a corruption, and the Bible is clear about this:

*"And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars,
even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God
hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven." - Deuteronomy 4:19*

¹⁰Genesius' *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, word #4216, page 462.

¹¹Bullinger, E. W., *The Witness of the Stars*, Kregel Publications, 1893, pages 10, 27.

¹²See Genesis 5:23-24 and Jude 14 for the life and prophecy of Enoch.

Were the Wise Men Astrologers?

Though God created the heavens to give forth a sign or *message* confirming what He would say in His Word, they were never intended to be the *source* of truth or *cause* of our behavior on earth. Signs are confirmations, they are never to be worshipped. Astrology was introduced at the tower of Babel. When Genesis 11:4 states “*let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven*”, the word reach is in italics, meaning it is not supported by the original Hebrew. A closer translation would read “*top with the heavens*” or in other words, the heavens were inscribed at the top of this tower in picture form and then worshipped under the leadership of Nimrod.

Astrology teaches that the sign under which you are born determines your destiny. In other words, the sign in which the sun travels during a certain month causes your personality traits to be formed. People read astrological charts today looking for the hope that only comes through the one who made the heavens! Its important to understand that due to the rotation of the earth, the sun no longer occupies the constellation originally given centuries before, and so the whole system is inaccurate anyway! The Wise Men were probably not astrologers in the strict sense of the word, neither were they magicians, though the root “magi” is the root of our current word for magic. How do we know this? For one thing, they came to worship Christ, not the stars! For another, they were looking for a *Jewish* king, not a secular one, and it would have been unlikely that they would have been astrologers as well as Jewish in their thinking.

The Focus of the Wise Men: *Leo* and *Virgo*

Could the Star of Bethlehem have come in a constellation that they would have understood? Many scholars have done research uncovering the original pictures which were drawn around groupings of stars to depict the meaning of their names. Many of the brightest starts still retain their ancient names, and these often come right from the Hebrew words in the Bible, confirming its eternal truth! Since the twelve signs of the zodiac are in effect a large circle, the focus of understanding their message has always been on the two constellations that could be considered the beginning and end of the circle.

*“Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?
Or canst thou guide Arcturus and his sons?” Job 38:32*

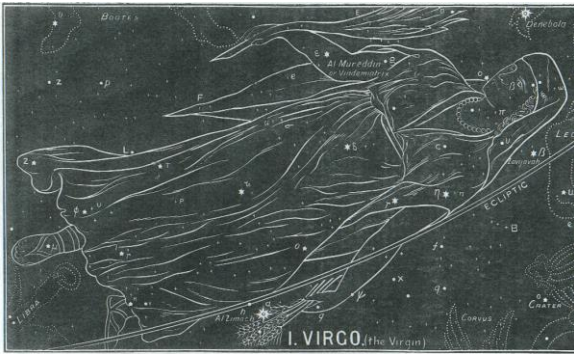
God brings forth the constellations (or Mazzaroth) in His timing. By Hebrew parallelism, though the constellations in general are brought forth in the first part of the verse, Arcturus, which is a star in Bootes, a decan or sub-constellation of Virgo is given as the specific start of this seasonal circle. Thus it is Virgo that begins the story brought forth by God in the heavens!¹³ The Book of Matthew declares this truth when it quotes from the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 “*the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name, Emmanuel*” (Isaiah 7:14).



Astronomers of old read the story book beginning with Virgo and ending with Leo also. The ancient Sphinx, with the head of a woman and the body of a Lion has been depicted by many ancient cultures indicating the beginning and end of the zodiac. The Sphinx in Egypt is a monolithic example of how cultures spent time deciphering the heavens. These two constellations are worth looking at in some detail since our Wise Men, or court astronomers, were focusing their attention on a coming King in general, and the King of the Jews in particular.

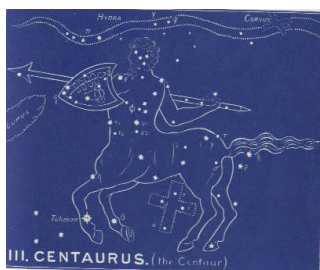
¹³Morris, Henry., *Many Infallible Proofs*, Creation Life Publishers, 1990., page 339.

The Constellation Virgo



Virgo is a picture of a woman with a branch in one hand and an ear of corn in the other. One of the brightest stars is named Tsemech, or Al Zimach, which means “*the branch*” and this word is used in the prophecy of Zechariah 3:8 “*I will bring forth my servant the Branch.*” Psalm 72:8 states “*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea*” but the phrase “shall have” is translated from a Hebrew root for the bright star Al Murredin which means “*the son who comes down.*” The Son that comes down as a branch through a virgin will have dominion from sea to sea! What a picture of God’s redemptive plan!

The three decans or sub-constellations associated with Virgo are extremely significant to our story of Christ’s birth, and would have been studied closely by both Jew and Gentile alike in the centuries preceding the advent of Christmas. The first is Coma, an ancient picture of a seated woman with a child in her lap. In all ancient cultures, the child is a boy. The derivation of the word Coma is “desired,” and is used in the prophetic Scripture “*the desire of all nations shall come*” (Haggai 2:7). It is interesting that the Persians, Chaldeans, and Egyptians gave names to the woman as the virgin, and the Hebrew name of the child in Greek means none other than Christos - or Christ!¹⁴ Today, this constellation of Coma is depicted by a corrupted image of a wig! By the third century it was corrupted by the Egyptians. However, original pictures show a seated woman who has given birth to a son whose name is Christ!



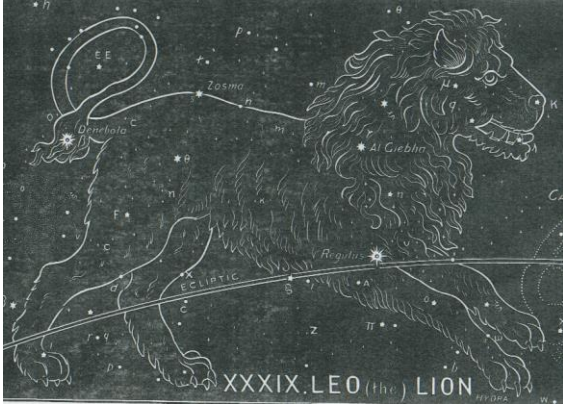
Centaurus, a modern picture of the head of a man and the body of a horse, is also connected to Virgo. Greek mythology has perverted this picture, and we do not know the original. Its name in Hebrew, however, is “despised” and this word comes from Isaiah 53:3 “*he is despised and rejected of men,*” speaking of Christ as Messiah. The picture has someone of two natures (the God-man Christ Jesus) given as a despised sin offering over the form of a cross! This child to be born of a virgin would one day die for the sins of the world as God’s offering on a cross! What a picture confirmation of God’s Word!

The final decan of Virgo is the constellation Bootes, already mentioned. The name of this constellation is derived from the Hebrew “*He cometh.*” He carries a spear in his right hand and a sickle in his left. Psalm 96:13 uses this name when it states “*for He cometh to judge the earth; He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with His truth.*” This constellation seems to look to the second coming of Christ! The sickle separates the wheat from the chaff at the end of the age, and a spear is reserved for His enemies. The brightest star, Arcturus, seen easily in the Northeast, means simply “*He cometh*”. Thus, this one major constellation Virgo, together with its decans or minor constellations, depicts the Savior of the World as a sin-offering being born of a virgin as a boy, and ultimately returning to judge the earth!



¹⁴Bullinger, *Witness of the Stars*, pages 34-35.

The Constellation Leo



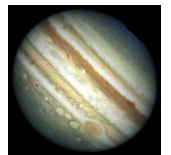
We now turn briefly to the other major constellation under review right next to Virgo. This is the constellation Leo, depicting the rule of Christ as King. This picture has had no corruption. His feet are over the head of Hydra the great serpent in the Heavens, and it depicts Christ as the “lion out of the tribe of Judah” conquering His enemies.

The brightest star in Leo on the ecliptic is Regulus, meaning “treading under foot” which is in the heart of the Lion. This star and constellation in ancient culture was known as the sign of kingship.¹⁵ This sign in the Heavens was linked by Persians with the prophecy of Balaam in

Numbers 24:8-9 and verse 17: *“he shall eat up the nations his enemies, and shall break their bones, and pierce them through with his arrows. He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion; who shall stir him up? I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not night; there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”*

Four hundred years of silence had caused them to hunger for a Messiah who would deliver Israel. Astronomers and astrologers, especially those from Persia who had been impacted centuries before by the prophet Daniel, also looked for the birth of a noble King that they thought would be foretold in the stars. Balaam’s prophecy in the book of Numbers had both Jews and Persian court astronomers’ attention, since Balaam was from the land of Persia, and was not a Jew but actually an enemy of Israel. If you remember, God caused him to prophesy blessing instead of cursing, and the prophecy linked the ancient meaning of Leo and the fact that a King would be born that would deliver the Jews.

The planet **Jupiter** was of particular interest to astronomers as well, since it meant in Hebrew *righteousness* and always symbolized kingship, coronations, and the birth of kings.¹⁶ Again, Balaam’s prophecy was well known to the Wise Men of Matthew 2 since he was probably their ancestor. Daniel had been promoted as head “magus” in Persia, and his prophecies of a coming Messiah were spread among other nations. Persia was unique, for it was the only nation other than Israel to make the law supreme rather than an individual monarch. Court astronomers became common and were all considered astrologers using magic since they saw the heavens as signs, and thus became referred to as “magi.”¹⁷



For those who studied the stars, both Jew and Gentile alike, the focus was on Leo and Virgo, as well as the planet Jupiter, for they were fused together in their minds much like the ancient Sphinx in Egypt. They could not separate Christ’s coming as a suffering servant and then as a reigning King. We can now understand that these Wise Men were looking for signs in the heavens that indicated the birth of a new King. They diligently watched the sky, looking for signs that indeed a new King would be born. Then, a remarkable set of circumstances would cause them to journey several months to Jerusalem.

¹⁵ Nickel, James., *Lift Up Your Eyes on High*, Christian Liberty Press, 1999, Appendix 10, page 94.

¹⁶ Nickel, James., *Lift Up Your Eyes on High*, page 94.

¹⁷ See Matthew Henry’s *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Hendrickson Publishing, 1991, Volume 5, page 8-9.

What was His Star?

“...for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” - Matthew 2:2



In order for this to be *His* star and also rise in the east like other stars (as the Greek word indicates), leading Wise Men from Persia to Jerusalem (from east to west), it could not be a meteor, comet, supernova or new star as some have speculated. In order to understand what the heavens might have looked like when Christ was born, we must determine the date of His birth. A brief look at two theories will suffice.



The dating of Christ's birth has been an interesting research project for many historians and theologians. We know that the pagan Roman festival of Yule-Day meaning “infant” or “little child” was so named for the feast of Saturn, the supposed birthday of the Sun. This birthday, which featured wild partying and sinful behavior, took place on December 25.¹⁸ It was not until 354 AD that Bishop Liberias of Rome ordered people to celebrate Christ's mass, merging pagan and Christian celebrations into one.¹⁹ We must remember, however, that perversions are usually corruptions of originals. It may be possible that December 25 holds significance in relation to the birth of Christ in several interesting ways.²⁰

The death of Herod was originally established by historians to be around April of 4 B.C., and we know that this occurred shortly after Christ's birth. If this date was accurate, and we take into account the flight to Egypt, and the number of weeks for the purification of the Virgin Mary fulfilling Old Testament Law, December 25 of the year before, or 5 BC, is a legitimate candidate for the date of Christ's birth.²¹ Few astronomical signs occurred in 5 BC, which would mean the star was simply supernatural.²²



The idea that December 25 could not be the birth date of our Lord because shepherds do not tend flocks outside in the winter has been disproven on several accounts. In fact, it is known that in late December shepherds deliberately tend flocks at night because baby lambs are born and they must be kept warm. As John Stormer relates, it is marvelous to think that Christ, the Lamb of God, was born at the time baby lambs are born in Isarel! Also, Zecharias' priestly function is noted in Luke 1:5 to be in the course of Abia, which could have occurred in October. Given the fact that it was in Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy that Mary visited her shortly after she had conceived, this would again bring us close to December 25 for the birth date of Christ.²³

¹⁸ See the author's work, *The Meaning of Christmas*, December, 1997 for sources on the origin of Christmas symbols.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, page 1.

²⁰ Edersheim, Alfred, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, page 187 and Appendix VII, pages 704-705.

²¹ *Ibid.*, page 704.

²² Bouw, Gerardus, *The Star of Bethlehem*, 1998; www.biblicalastronomer.org/ba/no86/

²³ Stormer, John., *Was the Lord Jesus Really Born at Christmas?*, Liberty Bell Press brochure dating Christ's birth.

The other credible scenario indicates that Christ may have been born in late September,²⁴ but even these still bring significance to December 25. Even more important, they indicate a fabulous confirmation in the heavens that is our focus. Recent reckoning puts the death of Herod at 1 BC rather than 4 BC. The year 2 BC, then, becomes the potential birth year of our Lord. And this year was also important for Rome. It was the 750th anniversary of Rome's founding, as well as the 25th year of Caesar Augustus. It was for this reason that a special census was put into effect in a year when a normal tax census would not have occurred. The Roman astronomers interpreted the astronomical signs in the heavens as confirming their reign of peace through Caesar Augustus. But another King was the focus of the Lord's precise timing!

The "star" that appeared in the heavens and sent the Wise Men on their journey considered by Herod to a confirmation of Caesar's anniversary. When the Wise Men arrived telling of the star of a new King, we understand now why it would bring such a turmoil of competition into Herod's mind. It was also a challenge to Caesar himself! When inquiring where this King would be born, he had Micah 5:2 read to him, "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*" The response of Herod, which fits his demented character, was to have all males under 2 years of age slaughtered in Bethlehem, which would have amounted to about 20 children.²⁵

With the help of computers, we can determine what the sky looked like at any date in history. Fasten your seat belts, for what you are about to hear is an amazing display of signs in the heavens during an 18 month period! The planet Jupiter and the star Regulus in Leo had a conjunction in September of 3 BC. A conjunction is when two objects in the sky seem to merge and become one. Right behind Leo was Virgo, clothed with the Sun at its rising, and a new moon at her feet. Years later, this very symbolism would be used in Revelation 12:1-5 about a pregnant woman with the moon at her feet, clothed with the sun, and stars around her head! Though in this passage Israel is the woman giving birth to the Church, it is interesting that this symbolism was taking place in the sky during the time when Christ was born!

But this is not all! Early in 2 BC, Jupiter had another conjunction with Regulus! Then, by June of 2 BC, Jupiter's retrograde motion (appearing to reverse direction due to the angle at which we view the planet) seemed to dance around Regulus for the third time, and then *join* Venus (to those in the East, this was the planet of motherhood)! To any trained observer, then, this would mean that a King from the tribe of Judah would be born of a woman! Following this show of lights, which astronomers think has not occurred for more than 3,000 years, came Virgo, now clear in the sky, depicting the fact that a virgin would bring forth a son that would be the *desire of all nations!* This would have caused the Wise Men to journey to Jerusalem rather than any headquarters in Rome, looking for a *Jewish* King born of a virgin!²⁶

According to this chronology, in response to the Roman census, Joseph and Mary traveled to Bethlehem, the city of their ancestors, and Jesus was born in a manger in mid to late September. The question now remains, how could this star have appeared to stop over Bethlehem when the Wise Men saw it for the second time? Amazingly, Jupiter went into a final retrograde motion, and would have been observed as stationery right above Bethlehem on December 25, 2 BC, the probable time when the Wise Men would have arrived there!²⁷

²⁴ See Nickel, James., *Lift Up Your Eyes on High*, page 95 for a plausible explanation for a September birth.

²⁵ See both Edersheim, page 187ff on the number killed in Bethlehem, as well as www.bethlehemstar.net/dance/dance.htm.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, page 2.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, page 2.

As Rome was celebrating its anniversary in mid-September of 2 BC, they interpreted the signs in Leo as a confirmation that indeed Caesar was the King of kings, for he was already called the “prince of peace”. However, at this precise time, God sent forth His Son into the world, confirming it with signs historically amazing! The sheer mathematical improbability of Regulus and Jupiter having a conjunction in Leo, and then uniting with Venus, with the Sun and new Moon in Virgo is staggering, especially at a time period when Christ could have been born!

But so it is today. Americans often celebrate Christmas in its Roman form. Like the Romans of old, we seem to be magnifying materialistic prosperity, the need for peace at any price, and crowning the State as the “prince of peace and security.” Yet just beneath the surface of this veneer, and the corrupted “signs of the times”, the real reason for the season, Jesus, the King of kings, is present! It is time we worship Him, for Jesus is the real King of kings and the real Prince of Peace.

Worship Him

*“...for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to **worship him.**” - Matthew 2:2*

God revealed himself by an angelic host to the shepherds on the night Christ was born. The angelic host sang forth their worship of Christ, (see Luke 2:8-20), and the shepherds went to the manger and did the same. As we have seen, God provided signs in the heavens that could be understood by magi living in Persia, and they came to worship Him. The Incarnation is the truth of Christmas. God reached down to man by being clothed in human flesh. The Star of Christ, whether supernatural or the timed movements of the planet Jupiter in Leo and Virgo, indicate again that God put His truth in a form that could be understood by those who sought Him. Shepherds understood Him though angels, and Wise Men did through the constellations.

God continues His incarnation principle by bringing His truth to bear in His people, and having them clothe it with human flesh for the world to see. We are the light of the world. Let us live like it. Consider Isaiah’s prophecy, spanning Christ’s birth to his reign as King.

“For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.” - Isaiah 9:6-7

Not only did signs confirm the Lord’s birth, they also confirmed the Lord’s death. The signs of the heavens confirmed Christ’s death on the cross as they did His birth. Scholars put the date of Christ’s death at April 3, 33 AD. Remember there is no 0 year in the calendar. Amazingly, our prophet Daniel stated in Daniel 9:25 *“know and understand this; from the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven sevens, and sixty-two sevens.... After the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off...”* The lunar year of 360 days must be used, and taking the sevens mentioned as seven years, indicating that 483 years from the decree to rebuild the Anointed One, Christ, he would be cut off, or die on the cross. When doing the math correctly with the adjustment in years, it comes to April 3, 33 AD, to the very day!²⁸

Astronomical evidence indicates that the only time a lunar eclipse took place at Passover, producing a “blood moon”, was on the very day of Christ’s crucifixion! At 3 PM, as Jesus breathed his last breath, the

²⁸ McDowell, Josh., *New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999, pages 195-202.

moon was in effect, turning to blood. This symbolism occurs both in the prophet Joel and Revelation. But there is more! The Bible tells us that the Sun grew dark as well, which we assume was supernatural, and of course all eyes would go toward the Sun for such an unusual thing to take place during the daylight. Do you know where the Sun was in the sky? In other words, when we say the Sun is in a specific constellation, we mean that during the day if the Sun disappeared and it was dark, the constellation designated would be in the exact spot where the Sun was.

When the Sun grew dark on Passover of April 3, 33 AD, all eyes focused on the constellation Aries, the lamb.²⁹ But this was not just any lamb, because its star names indicate something far more significant. The chief stars El Nath which means “wounded, slain”, Al Sheratan meaning “bruised” tell the story that this is the Lamb of God, slain for the foundation of the world! In addition to the darkness, earthquake and rent of the veil, this may be reason why some said “*this indeed is the Son of God*” (Matthew 27:54). The real question is, what will you do with these confirmations? He is the sacrifice for your sins! Do you know Him? Let us, like the Wise Men of old, see His Star, and His hand, confirming His presence in our lives to such a degree that we, too, will go and worship Him! He was born to die and rise again!

“behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29);
“...and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain...” (Revelation 5:6)



²⁹ Bullinger, E. W., *Witness of the Stars*, page 105-107.