



CHRIST AND CHRISTMAS

Lessons from the Wise Men

*Wise men from the East
came to Jerusalem... we
have seen His star in the
East – Matthew 2:1-2*

What was the Star?

Who were the Wise Men?



What are the Lessons we can learn Today?

Who were the Wise Men?

- Originally steeped in astrology (and occult), they became court astronomers (from ancient Persia)
- Daniel put in charge of the “magi” (2:46-49)
- Daniel 2:48 – *Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief (captain) administrator (governor) over all the wise men (magus) of Babylon (for over 70 years)*

How did they become Court Astronomers?

- Daniel's "school of the Magi" continued...
 - Generations studied Old Testament prophecy
 - They were also astronomers, confirming "signs"
- Believers who knew the "signs in the heavens" and prophecies of Messiah's birth
- Their caravan may have had 24 people...
- They sought the fulfillment of OT prophecy!

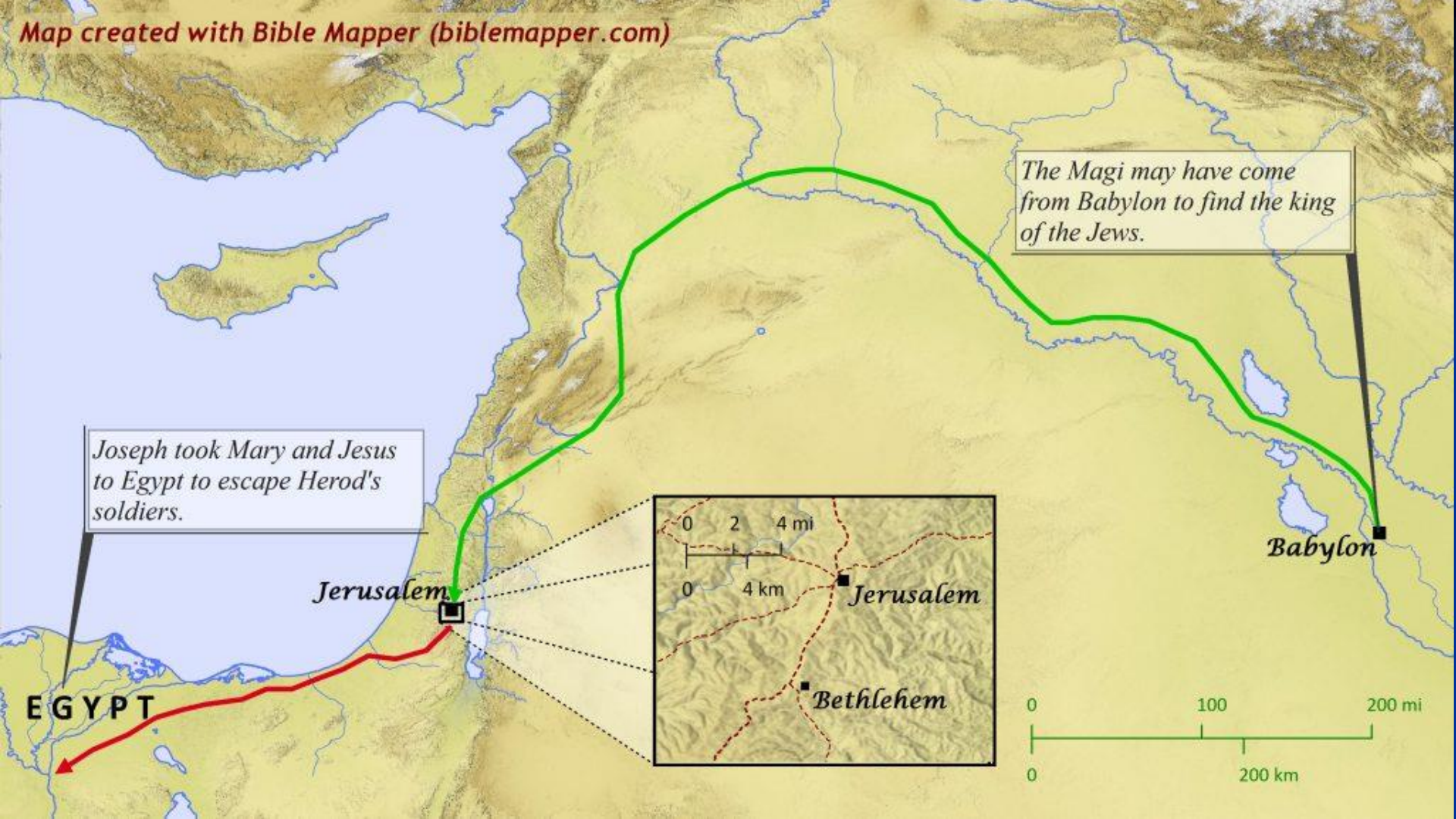
Magi were not Astrologers or Kings; but believing astronomers

They studied OT prophecy

They studied the heavens



Travelled over 1,000 miles in a group of 24 taking five months



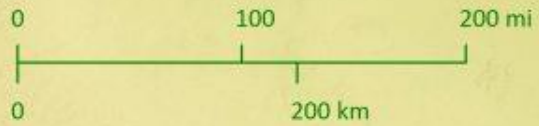
The Magi may have come from Babylon to find the king of the Jews.

Joseph took Mary and Jesus to Egypt to escape Herod's soldiers.

EGYPT

Jerusalem

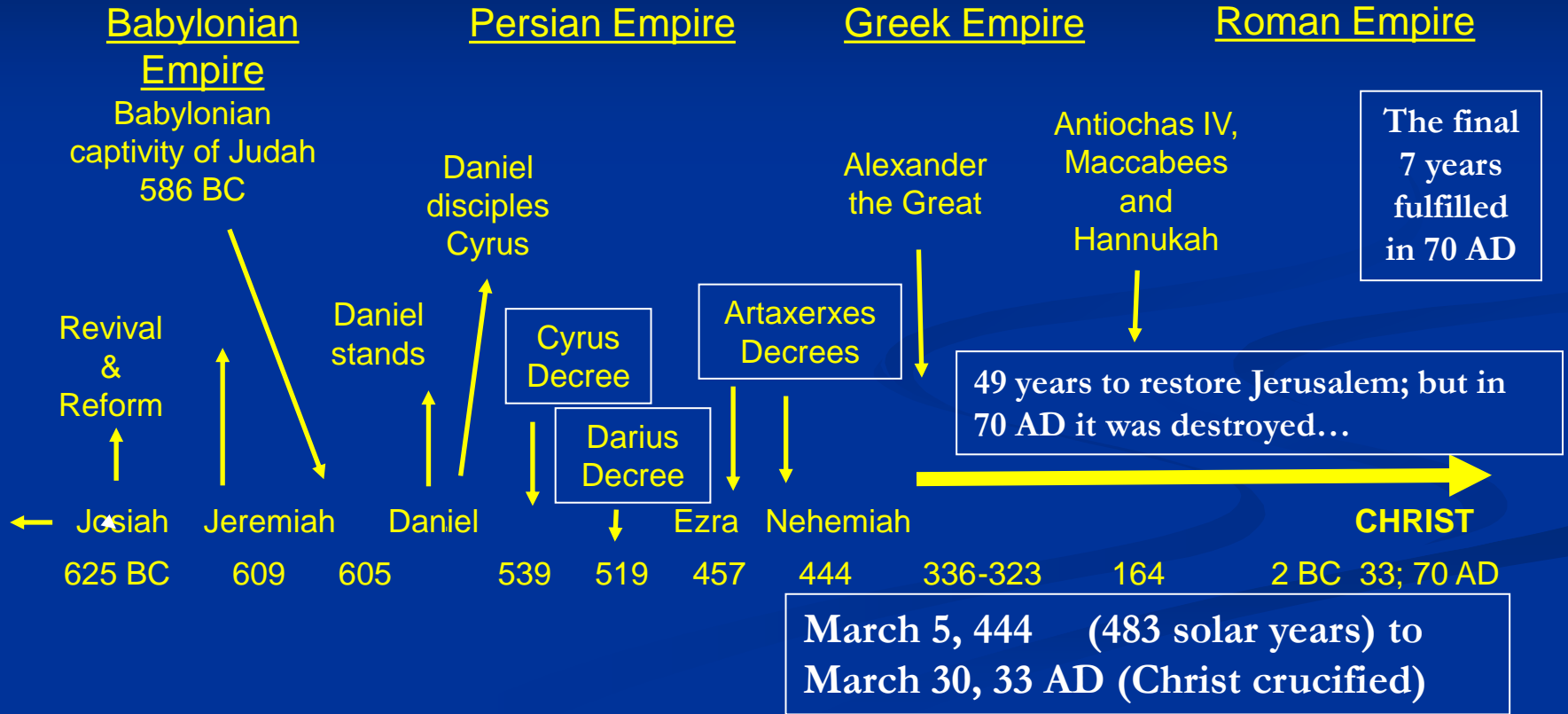
Babylon



Daniel's Prophecy of 70 Weeks

Daniel 9:24-26 – Seventy weeks (490 years) are determined for your people and for your holy city, to finish the transgression, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the command to restore and build Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (483 years); the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublesome times. And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...

The Seventy Week Prophecy of Daniel



Daniel's legacy and life:

Daniel 12:3 – those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever

The background of the slide features a sunset sky with a bright star in the upper left. In the foreground, three camels with riders are silhouetted against the horizon. The text is overlaid on the image.

Behold wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “where is He who has been born King of the Jews?” – Matthew 2:1-2

Prophecies of Messiah's Birth

- If his death can be determined, the time of birth as well
- A child of a virgin in Bethlehem – Is. 7:14; 9:6, Micah 5:2
- Balaam's prophecy – Numbers 24:17 – *a star shall come out of Jacob; a scepter shall rise out of Israel*
- Zoroastres, founder of Zoroastrian sect - ancient book - “Messiah shall be revealed, a bright and shining star shall arise in the east”
- Judah's tribe was associated with *Leo* (the lion)
- The Wise men believed a star would arise in the constellation *Leo* at the time of Messiah's birth

Signs in the Heavens

What did the Wise Men believe they meant?

- Genesis 1:14 - *...let them be for signs (of one to come) and seasons, and for days and years*
- Psalm 19:1-4 - *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows his handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.*
- The heavens are a sign of Christ to come, *not a fatal determination of our destiny (astrology)*

The Ancient Sphinx of Giza – 2578 BC

The body of a Lion
(Leo)

The head of a Woman
(Virgo)



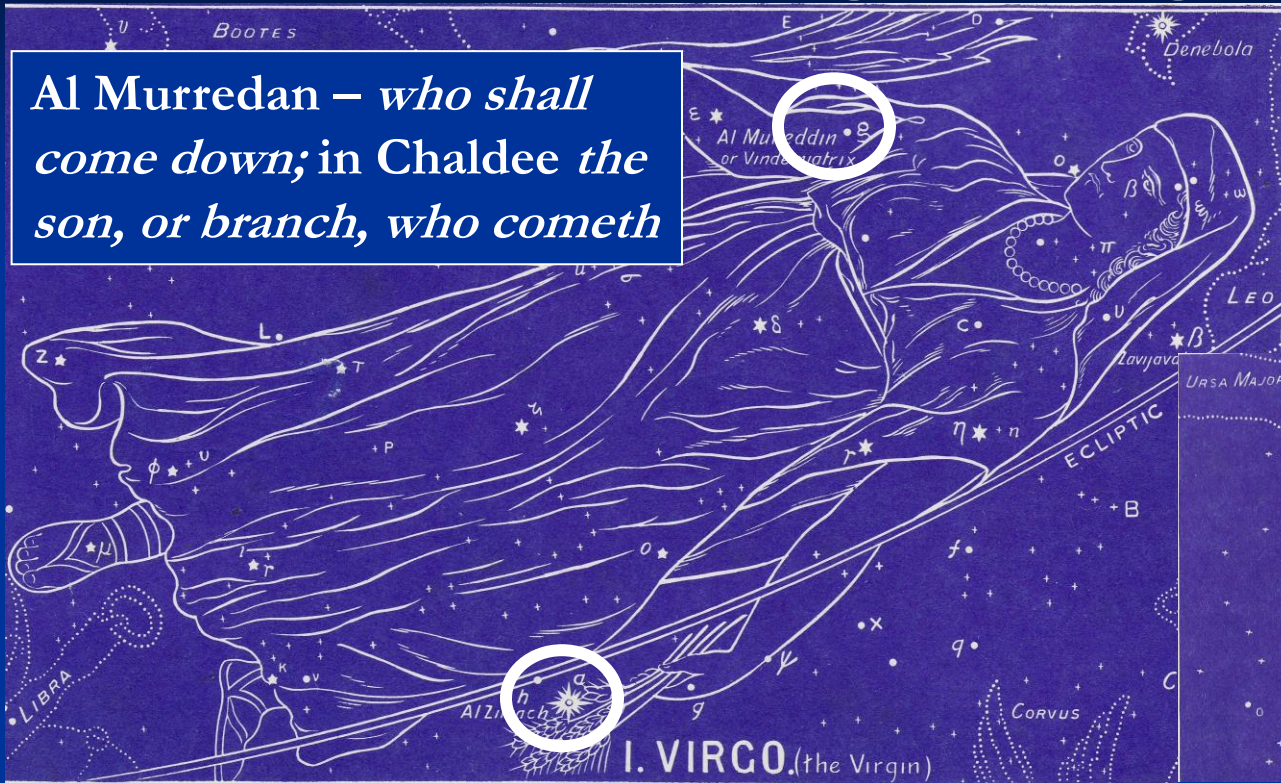
Adam, Seth and Enoch the first astronomers?

- The Constellations are a circular picture book beginning with Virgo, ending with Leo
- Stars were given ancient names (Ps. 147:4)
- Regulus (treading under foot), in Leo (a king)
- Planet Jupiter (associated with kings)
- Virgo (a virgin), with Al Zimach (the branch)
- Planet Venus (associated with motherhood)

The Constellation Virgo – *a virgin shall conceive*

Al Murredan – who shall come down; in Chaldee the son, or branch, who cometh

Coma – the desired or longed for (Haggai 2:7) the desire of all nations shall come



Al Zimach – the branch (Zech 3:8)

And bear a son

The Constellation Leo – *the Lion of Judah*



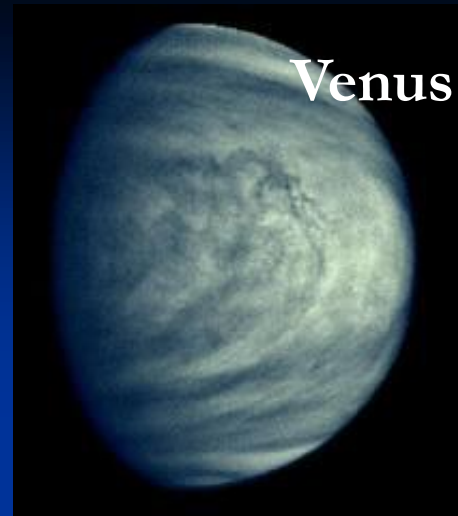
Regulus – *treading under foot*

Jupiter



The Planet
for Kings

Venus



The Mother
Planet

- Jupiter and Regulus had a conjunction in Leo in Sept. 3 BC
- In early 2 BC, another conjunction of Jupiter and Leo
- June of 2 BC, Jupiter's retrograde motion made it appear to dance around Regulus for the third time, and then join Venus



To a trained court astronomer skilled in Jewish prophecy, it meant *a Jewish king was to be born of a virgin; the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy*



The Magi began their journey when they saw the star “in the East”

The Magi’s 1,000+ mile journey with the caravan would have taken at least five lunar months



Due to retrograde motion, the star may have appeared to stay still for up to six days over Bethlehem at the time of Christ's birth



In Rome, the star was interpreted to honor the 750th year of Rome's founding and Caesar Augustus' 25th year as the "prince of peace"

When Herod heard that it meant a "new king" he initiated the slaughter of boys under 2 in Bethlehem (up to 20 died)



After Joseph, Mary and Jesus had moved into a home in Bethlehem, the Magi would have met Jesus when he was 18 to 24 months old but soon after, the family would escape to Egypt before Herod's massacre



Whether God miraculously formed the Star or providentially used the timing of astronomy...



The birth of Christ teaches us that He sovereignly times all events in the interest of His Kingdom!



If God can time the planets and stars, it is wise for us to trust Him!