



The Arrival of God's Messiah - Astronomy, History, and Prophecy Support the Christmas Story By Karen Sue Nyquist

1. **How Does God Communicate to Us?** - God has many avenues at His disposal to communicate with people. In the case of the coming of His Messiah, God used His prophets and spoke through them using prophecy, dreams, visions, and angelic messengers. To get the word out to millions of others, He even used astronomy - the lights (stars, planets, etc.) in the heavens. "Then God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs'" (Genesis 1:14). **We are not to use astrology, as the Bible speaks against using any kind of divination or occultic activities (Isaiah 47:13; Deuteronomy 18:10-11).** Stars have no power over us nor they do not control our future. **But God does use astronomy to get our attention and to tell us some His plans. Using astronomical computer simulations, prophecy, and historical records, let's look at some of the evidence that supports the story the coming of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. (I read many articles but most of this material comes from bethlehemstar.com.)**

2. **Through Daniel the Prophet, God Gave a Timeline of When to Expect His Messiah** - Daniel was an Israelite who was captured and exiled to Babylon. Because God spoke through him, he was promoted to be one of the leading wise men or magi of the land (Daniel 2:48). He did not engage in astrology, but had a reputation (Daniel 6:28) for centuries as a man through whom God gave reputable predictions. He recorded those prophecies which continue to be accurate throughout history. The angel Gabriel told Daniel that: 1) the Babylonians would be conquered by the Medes and Persians (529 BC), 2) who would in turn be conquered by the Greeks (490 BC), 3) afterward another kingdom (the Romans) would arise, 4) and during that kingdom the Messiah (the Christ) would come. Gabriel said, "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; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times" (Daniel 9:24-26). Each "week" represented one year. This prophecy was fulfilled when King Artaxerxes of Persia, told Nehemiah to rebuild the wall and city (Nehemiah 2:5) on March 14, 445 BC. Using planetarium computer simulations, Jesus was probably born in 3-2 BC, during the Roman captivity of Israel.

3. **Why Did the Wise Men/Magi Come to Judah?** The Magi had studied the prophecies of Daniel and other Jewish prophets. From Daniel's "Seventy Weeks" prophecy (Daniel 9:24), they knew the general timing for the Messiah, the King of the Jews to be born. They were probably Zoroastrian astronomers who believed in one god and knew to watch the stars for the signs partly because of Balaam's prophecy, "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob (*Judah*); A Scepter (*king*) shall rise out of Israel" (Numbers 24:17). They had been watching the movements of the stars and correctly understood that the Messiah, the King of the Jews, had been born. Since this king is so important that the God of the universe used the stars to announce His birth, the Magi knew they had to go seek Him and worship Him.

4. **What Movement in the Skies Caught Their Attention?** - During the years of 3-2 BC there were several celestial displays that took on increased symbolic meaning. 1) The planet Jupiter, representing God - the King of Heaven - traveled into the constellation Leo the Lion (representing the country of Judah). 2) There it circled Regulus, the King Star in Leo, indicating that a king was about to be born in Judah. 3) Then Jupiter had a conjunction with the planet Venus (woman/mother), which means their orbits were so close that they appeared to have joined each other. 4) Then looking as though they were one dazzling star, both planets traveled west, toward Judah.

This is probably the "star" that the wise men followed into Judaea (Roman name for Judah). It was the first Jupiter/Venus conjunction of August 12, 3 BC in the constellation Cancer that alerted the Magi to look for further signs. They found them - in the triple conjunction of Jupiter with Regulus in the constellation Leo. When Jupiter and Regulus were first meeting, 5) the constellation Virgo (the Virgin) rose in the sky, 6) the Sun (the Supreme Ruler God) was on her shoulder (*the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary to produce the conception - Luke 1:35*), then 7) moved lower (*into her womb*) and 8) a new moon moved under her feet which represented that she had given birth. WOW! It was the second conjunction, on June 17, 2 BC, in the evening, of Jupiter and Venus, in the constellation Leo, that probably started the Magi on their way west. We know that Jesus came from heaven into the tribe of the Lion of Judah, through the womb of the virgin Mary. Through God's divine providence, His Spirit had led people hundreds of years before to name all these constellations and stars in such a manner as to proclaim the coming of the Lord Jesus, who will be the King of the world at His second coming (Daniel 7:13-14). Jesus also refers to Daniel's prophecy and to His own second coming (Matthew 24:29-31). The seventieth week represents the Great Tribulation and the War of Armageddon, another topic.

5. **Biblical Account of the Arrival of the Wise Men/Magi** - "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.' When Herod the king (*Herod the Great's reign - 37 BC to 1 BC*) heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet (*Micah 5:2*): But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall



come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.' When they heard the king, they departed; and

behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood (stopped) over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (prophesied in Isaiah 60:6). Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way" (Matthew 2:1-12).

"Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph (he and Mary had recently married) in a dream, saying, 'Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.' When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt I called My Son' (Hosea 11:1). Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (Matthew 2:13-16).

6. **How Did the Star Stop Over Bethlehem?** - Because the planet Jupiter is in an orbit and so is the earth, there are times when planets will appear to stop and sometimes even back up and go the other way. Of course that's not happening but it appears to be from our viewpoint on earth. When this happens it is called a retrograde. When Jupiter came to Bethlehem, it went into a normal retrograde and appeared to stop and stay over the house where by this time, Joseph, Mary, and the young child Jesus were living.

7. **What Other Movement in the Skies Did God Show a Prophet?** - John the Apostle saw this vision which tells more of the Christmas Story. By using computer simulations we better understand what John saw. "Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman (the constellation Virgo) clothed with the sun (it was on her shoulder), with the moon (new moon) under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars (a gathering of stars/planets off in the distance representing the 12 tribes of Judah). Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth. And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon ... And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born. She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne" (Revelation 12:1-5). Virgo means virgin. It had been prophesied, "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us)" (Isaiah 7:14). The woman is Mary/Israel, who gives birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah and will be the ruling King of the Jews and of the world at His second coming. The fiery dragon, Satan, using Herod, tries to kill Jesus as soon as He is born, but didn't succeed. Thirty-three year later, after Jesus is crucified, He ascends up to His Father, God to His throne in heaven. Jesus means, Jehovah Savior, Jehovah as savior is with us.

8. **How Can God Coordinate the Planetary Movements, Constellations, Prophets, Kings, Empires, and the Future From the Past?** God is an amazing, all powerful, all knowing God Who "declares the end from the beginning" (Isaiah 46:10)! Would you like to know this God and His Son the Savior? Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). On the night Jesus was born, God sent angels with this message to some shepherds, "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). Are you ready to repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior? He is loving and strong enough for you to trust Him with your life and your future!

Suggested Prayer: Jesus, I know that you are the Savior of the world, that You died to pay for my sins. I repent of my sins and ask You to be my Lord and Savior. I will serve and follow You. Thank You! Name _____ Date _____

Now that you have received Jesus, He will start revealing Himself to you. But to steadily improve your relationship with Jesus, spend time with Him. Start talking (praying) to Him. Read His book, the Bible, where He reveals Himself even more clearly. Go to a good church where you feel God's presence, they preach the Bible, and you can fellowship with other believers. Get baptized and be filled with His Holy Spirit. We learn much about God from each other.

GOD BLESS YOU! NationTakers Ministries

856 Cabrillo St., San Francisco, CA 94118 - Mail P.O. Box 27475, San Francisco, CA 94127

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